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MURAL PAINTINGS IN ENGLISH CHURCHES DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

ST. PHILIP

ST. JUDE

From the rood-screen, Cawston Church, Norfolk (beginning of 15th Century)

"Mural Paintings in English Churches during the Middle Ages"

An Introductory Essay on the Folk Influence in Religious Art

By Frank "Kendon"

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TO

G. G. COULTON

TO WHOM I OWE MUCH FOR THE BOOK'S SAKE

AND MUCH MORE FOR MY OWN

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PREFACE

WHEN I began to work upon the ideas embodied in this essay, I was foolish enough to cast about in my mind for justifying reasons, thinking that a treatise upon the remote art—and religious art at that—of this country could provide little material of interest to a twentieth-century reader. That dry knowledge was not a sufficient justification of itself seemed reasonable to me; for such arrays of facts are dead, and I did not feel that I was qualified either to collect such facts or, even having mastered my raw material, to inspire it with any life.

To pose as a critic of mediæval religion seemed to me to be the most barren of all useless occupations; for the faults of the age were dead with the age, and death is more than correction.

Those who have patience enough to read through the harvest of this dubiety will easily perceive how, in the very process of writing, the subject developed itself. The work began,

on a foundation of statistics, in an attempt to draw some general conclusions concerning matters of common faith and common knowledge in the Middle Ages—conclusions much more likely to be provided by mural paintings than by literature, which was still the business of professional clerics, or by sculpture, which was that of an uncommonly circumscribed guild system. These paintings, as the Church herself admitted, were intended to appeal in a special manner to the folk. I have deduced, with what propriety readers will judge, that they became more than appeals; that, by a kind of natural selection, as well as by direct derivation, they were a true folk-expression. Thus by purposely directing the main attention to church pictures, if my contention is true, I have been taking the common man's view of his creed. I have not found it desirable, and it would not have been easy, to exclude all personal prejudices and opinions from my work; and though this may appear as a fault in the eyes of historians it was, I thought, the only way open to me of infusing life into the carcass of an inventory. My

essay had as putative audience those whose ideas of mediæval religion and its art are what mine were. When these have read to the last chapter, they will have learned most of what I have since learned; they will have been provoked, I hope, into a desire to find out where I am wrong, and so perhaps some serious work will be continued upon this topic, and the world be the better place at length by realizing the truth about one more aspect of its past. And that, of course, will placate the historians.

Apart from this matter of the past, however, I have found that an honest attempt to estimate another's point of view serves to clarify one's own. It is all the better if that other be dead, for then he is beyond being shown the error of his ways: and, the eye being dead that had the mote in it, the need for hurry is done away, and there is leisure to see whether one's own power of vision leaves anything to be desired. And so perhaps this essay justifies a twentieth-century appearance, because, although it deals with a time buried these five hundred years, it is concerned with the very

people of that time, alive, and holding opinions, and acting upon the opinions they held.

As for these folk, these barbarous forefathers of ours, and their opinions, I have considered what they painted, and have read something of their literature, and this was all the yeast I employed. If they do not live in what I have written, that is the fault of my expression only; for they were vivid enough in what they said and portrayed. But in addition I owe enormous debts to men who have worked over the fields into which I have wandered, and a list of books used and authorities cited will be found elsewhere. It remains for me to acknowledge personal help and much encouragement from one who is, among other things, an authority on the times of which this book treats, and at whose suggestion the work was started. That he has read the essay without finding any serious faults of fact, gives me the courage I needed to offer it to a larger public; and so, without any more excusing, the courageous readers are left to themselves. Work begins on the very next page.

1923. F. K.

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MURAL PAINTINGS IN ENGLISH CHURCHES DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

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I

Introductory

IN an age where reading and writing were the accomplishments of the very few, and those few of the leisured class only, it is obvious that, in any consideration of the relations of Church to Commonalty, written books as a means of direct instruction may be quite ruled out. Even reading aloud from the liturgy as a source of religious instruction may be almost equally neglected, since Latin was the religious language, and was often scarcely understood by many of the officiating priests themselves. Preaching, which might have

proved more effective, was in a sad state of neglect, as many contemporary complaints will testify. But preaching was to a certain extent carried on, and to a larger extent perhaps, outside the churches, by the travelling friars. There remains the appeal to the eye by paintings, sculpture, and windows; and this was claimed by the Church herself as the chief and most important source of instruction: "Our churches," they often assert, "are the Bibles of the people."

The arts had such an important place assigned to them in the work of instructing the people, that, as we shall see, there was no vital doctrine which they were not called upon to express. Though I shall not be able to confine myself to this Bible of the People, most of the deductions will be made from a consideration of works of art; and, since there is available an exhaustive catalogue * of the mural paintings that have been discovered in churches of the British Isles, I shall make this the basis of the present study. Some three thousand churches are instanced in this book, and a

* Keyser. (See list of Authorities, p. 232.)

comparison with other records of manuscript and early illustrated books, and, in general, the multifarious sculptures of French cathedrals, shows that the subjects treated in the mural paintings may be considered alone and be representative.

The " art " of the Middle Ages, about which so much has been said and written, has really nothing to do with the subject in hand. But it may be wise to spend a little time in pointing out that Art and the Artist are, with their capitals, of comparatively recent invention. The men who produced much of the sculpture ornamenting French cathedrals, for instance, were not encouraged to pander to their artistic temperaments. They worked, presumably contentedly, masons among masons, for masons' wages, and were not more concerned in any struggle for fame or recognition than are many artisans of to-day. That they produced " works of art " (if they could have understood the modern definition), would have amazed them. Technique was chiefly valuable because it gave them power to say what they had to say in as brief a manner as possible, compatible with

clearness. It seems that they worked by piece-work ; dexterity therefore meant higher pay to them. They went through the prentice and journeyman stages as all other masons did, learning the traditional methods.* Conventions were thus perpetuated ; and if a mason wished to exercise originality he confined its exercise to the less important details.

The Church, though never truly universal, was, in proportion, more widespread than it is to-day; and the conventions, which were either facts reduced to their simplest terms (*i.e.* symbols of facts) or symbols of doctrines, were generally accepted and jealously guarded. Once the language of art had been formed, it was maintained and understood, to some extent at least, in all countries under Rome ; for the Church was the nominal mistress, and art her servant until the Renaissance ; and when, after the Renaissance, art began to treat the religious themes as mere material, the conventions were so firmly fixed that they were not dropped even then ; though their introduction was no longer inevitable.

* Pillion, p. 63, etc.

Though there is much originality exhibited in the art of the Middle Ages, it is not this, but the power of tradition, which is amazing ; such common subjects as the Crucifixion, or the Nativity, are found, in places far apart, to be made up upon precisely the same laws, the one with the Virgin on the right hand of Christ, and St. John on the left, the other with, for example, the invariable, though apocryphal adjuncts of ox and ass. It is not that there is no variety—there is plenty—but that under it all there lies a fundamental similarity which makes one feel certain that a very strong tradition is being carried on. M. Émile Mâle, to whose two valuable books I here acknowledge my very great debt throughout my work, is so impressed with the persistence of tradition that he wishes to infer the existence of an artists' manual * similar to that rather late example found by M. Didron in the convents of Mount Athos. But such a manual, it seems to me, would have made adherence slavish and unprogressive, as, in comparison, the art of the Greek Church certainly proves. Tradition,

* Vol. i. Book IV. chap. vi.

apprentice-lore, would still leave scope for the variety which, as I have said, does exist in Western art, while guarding the underlying uniformity. Also there is no record whatever of any such manual. Reasons of doctrine or narrative would have ensured that the accounts current did not vary much—though it would not, and did not, prevent their *growth*—but within these limits the artist might interpret as his knowledge and manner directed him.

There were two reasons for artistic activity : the didactic and the decorative. The decorative came chronologically first, with simple bands of colour, as may still be remarked at Ely, or a plain moulding ornament—something to break the severity of the masonry, or add richness to capital, arch and cornice. Late, again, ornament serving no other purpose is lavishly employed ; but it has passed through the stages when imitation and symbolism had taught the carvers some skill in sculpture, and it has become naturalistic, or is derived from natural forms. In the progress from the one to the other, ornament was never entirely symbolical, and much ingenuity has been

wasted in trying to interpret carvings which were never endowed with allegory. Grotesques, especially, such as gargoyles, and composite representations of the devil, have been too often too elaborately explained.

To the ingenious cloistered student in the Middle Ages everything was a symbol: history, natural history, the sacred writings, and mathematics, were all treated as, in some mysterious way, shadowing forth the story of the Fall and the Redemption. Naturally enough, art and architecture did not escape. But when we come to examine the elaborate systems drawn up by such compilers as Durandus, we find that a large proportion of the symbolism is evolved by the scholar, after the event, while comparatively little can be definitely pronounced inherent, or a product of the mind of artist or builder. To the thoughtful mind everything is significant, and anything may be considered symbolically; but to read into every fancy of artists a deep and subtle intention is to endow the artists with much more ingenuity than their class, or any but the few brilliant schoolmen, could possibly have possessed.

II

The System upon which Subjects were Chosen. Treatment of the Old Testament

THE religious art of the Middle Ages divides itself into three categories of purpose. If its aim was the instruction of the people, its three manners of instruction may be said to be the moral, the historical or narrative, and the dogmatic. Durandus, indeed, separates the various senses in which Holy Scripture may be read into four classes or manners : the historic, the allegoric, the tropologic, and the anagogic ; but the tropological, or moral allegory, and the anagogical, or spiritual allegory inculcating doctrine, are really two more subtle divisions of the allegorical.

Before entering upon a detailed analysis of the mural paintings catalogued in Keyser, it

might be well to illustrate these three divisions by a few examples. Among the moralities preached pictorially I find that eighteen instances still remain of representations of the Acts of Mercy, those which are detailed in Matt. xxv. 35 and 36: "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." In French cathedral sculpture the Psychomachia—or battle between Virtues and Vices—is a favourite subject. In this each Virtue transfixes her contrary Vice on her spear, or, if no battle be represented, the Virtues and Vices are depicted in contrasted panels. A Psychomachia is to be found in the Painted Chamber at Westminster Hall. Later than these another morality became immensely popular in England, and, indeed, in Europe generally. It was known as "Le dit des trois rois vifs et des trois rois morts," and represented three youthful kings surprised during their hawking by three Deaths.* It is not

* For illustration, see p. 198

distinctively Christian in spirit, and constitutes a solemn reminder of the terror and constant imminence of death. Let these examples suffice for the moment. They illustrate a division or purpose of mediæval art not much applied ; a fact which should help us to understand that abstract morality had no particular precedence in the religion of the Middle Ages. The walls and windows of their churches made no strong personal appeal ; art was far from being evangelical ; and so we should expect to find also that mere narrative holds no prominent place.

It is true enough that the mediæval artist seems to miss innumerable opportunities, the rich mines of story in the Old Testament are almost untouched ; for, though representations of Old Testament scenes appear, these are generally, if not always, subsidiary—to be understood rather as examples, symbols, foreshadowings of New Testament events than as containing any intrinsic interest or instruction. The gospel narrative, too, is only thinly drawn upon, and always in those parts where the two doctrines of the Virgin Birth and the

Atonement may be illustrated. Thus the most widely represented portions of the life of Our Lord are the scenes of the Nativity and those of the Passion. In the early days of mediæval art these likewise were represented rather from a doctrinal point of view than for any love of narrative or realism ; but, as M. Émile Mâle has shown,* with the rising popularity of the Miracle Plays art came down from the anagogic to the actual, and began to take delight in the human side of the story.† The Nativity then, and the Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection constitute the best examples of narrative art, and close to these, and with still less of dogma, and perhaps more of human interest, come the histories of the saints, and in particular those of the martyrs : the lives of St. Katharine of Alexandria, St. Martin, and St. Nicholas proving especially popular. But the History

* Vol. ii.

† In his Introduction (xlii) Keyser also points out that in the thirteenth century "the practice of depicting a series of events in the history of the life of Christ upon earth, of the Virgin, SS. Katharine, Thomas of Canterbury, and others, seems to have become very common ; the former subject being most commonly found on the walls of the chancel, the others on those of the nave."

of the Virgin, if works of art dealing with this subject had not suffered under the hands of the reformers out of proportion with the destruction of other subjects, would certainly prove more widespread than all.

I wish to avoid, as far as possible, the usual comparison of the minds of the mediævals with the minds of children, because it is a parallel which may easily mislead. These folk, however, did have that open faith in authority which characterizes a child of seven to-day. They had also a love of story for its own sake ; and nothing is more noticeable in the sermons of the time—Mirk's " Festial " gives a series of striking examples—than the way in which, upon the slightest excuse, a story is slipped into the homily. Art then had its proportion of narrative too ; but the point which it is important to emphasize is that, out of the vast fields of legend and history from which they might have selected, the artists were strangely limited in their choice, and especially in the matter of Scriptural histories. The scheme of narrative art was, in fact, itself a contribution to the illustration

and enforcement of the dogmas of the Church, though exception ought perhaps to be made for the stories of the saints.

It will not be necessary to do more than call attention to examples of the third division of the artistic purpose—the Trinity, the Doom, and, less obviously dogmatic, the Crucifixions, where the Virgin and St. John stand to right and left of the cross, respectively, and symbolize in their persons the old and new dispensations, the Blessed Virgin standing for the Church, and St. John the Evangelist for the Synagogue.* Many such instances might be adduced, and even from pictures superficially only narrative. But just here lies the difficulty and danger of the whole matter; for I suppose there is nothing which an ingenious mind cannot consider symbolical.

In the particular study of the relations between art and the common people, however, it will be safer to assume that nothing which needs prolonged study and involved explanation, nothing, in fact, which is not obviously symbolical, is intentionally so. For where it

* See p. 89 (footnote).

was part of the artist's purpose to make us see beyond the fact or event he is relating, he will not fail to provoke some question in the mind which only searching will answer. If symbolism is not thus provocative it is dead. There is a great deal of this dead symbolism—such as, for example, the dragon against which St. George fights, which at first was nothing but a symbol of paganism or evil; but which gradually took upon itself a more substantial body, until, the symbolism dead, it became a real dragon, only faintly recalling by its monstrous ugliness the old evil which it had once personified.

It will be important to keep these divisions of our subject in mind, though it would not be convenient to classify according to them. It has been difficult, indeed, to seize upon any system which would serve to reduce to order the chaos of these recorded remains. The Bible forms, at least, a basis upon which to begin.

The story of the Creation and the works of the six days will be found carved upon the encyclopædic façades of French cathedrals.

The Creator is generally shown as a young man, as Christ, because, as Didron points out, the world was made by the word of God, and Our Lord, according to St. John, was the Word. It is a favourite device, in MSS. also, to allot one medallion to each day, the special creatures of the day being shown therein. At Chartres, Day and Night are shown as semi-nude figures, one carrying a torch and the other having the head enveloped in clouds. It is at Chartres, too, that God becomes, as it were, a sculptor in clay at the creation of man, modelling the form of Adam with his hands, the half-made man leaning meanwhile against the Creator's knees.*

Keyser's list records but one Creation, of the time of Henry VII, at Exeter Cathedral.† This is the first of a series of panel paintings on the organ screen, the full series being : the Creation, Adam and Eve in the Garden of

* Pillion, p. 138. One is tempted to connect this with the miracle play on this subject. It was performed at York by the Guild of Cardmakers, and is thus described by Roger Burton, town clerk in 1415 : " God the Father creating Adam of the clay of the earth, making Eve of Adam's rib, and inspiring them with the breath of life "

† At Easby Church, Yorkshire, is a mural painting of the Creation *of Man*.

Eden, the Deluge, the Children of Israel crossing the Red Sea, the destruction of Solomon's Temple, the angel appearing to Zacharias, the Nativity, the Baptism of Christ, the Deposition, Resurrection, Ascension, and the Day of Pentecost. This seems, though an unusual list, to set forth the main facts of the history of the world as then conceived ; the crossing of the Red Sea is used in the *Biblia Pauperum* as the type of baptism ; the destruction of Solomon's Temple perhaps typifies the destruction of the old law, the new dispensation is set forth by the doctrinal landmarks in the life of Our Lord, and the Day of Pentecost carries forward into our own times the gift then bestowed upon the Church in the persons of the Apostles. It is the only surviving painting of the Day of Pentecost, as it is, also, the only example of the Creation to be found in England. At Norwich Cathedral, it is true, there is a series of bosses on the vaults of nave and choir representing subjects from the Creation to the time of Solomon, and from the birth of Christ to the Last Judgment ; but we must bear in mind that such bosses are not

easily decipherable from the floor. Since there is no reason for supposing that representations of the Creation were specially destroyed by any subsequent Puritan fervour, and only one instance, and that in a series, is to be found surviving in England, it seems safe to conclude that the subject was never very frequent. Our English artists were always a great way behind those of the Continent in power, and this example is late ; one might suggest, perhaps, that such a subject needed too bold and confident a hand to become widespread in England. It cannot be through any lack of interest in the subject, for the story is an answer to the question which, sooner or later, is bound to arise in nearly every man's mind. The story of Adam and Eve, showing forth the doctrine of the Fall of man, is much more frequently represented. Keyser gives twelve examples, four of which belong to the fifteenth century, two to the fourteenth, and one, at Easby, to the thirteenth. The example which takes the most definitely narrative form is found on the screen at Kempston, where are shown : the presentation of Eve to Adam, the Temptation, the Curse, and the

Expulsion from Paradise. The choice of the first of these subjects seems to point to the artist's desire to show the woman's responsibility, and this, of course, was itself a point of doctrine. At Colton the Temptation and Expulsion from Paradise are coupled with the Resurrection of Our Lord, thus plainly recalling the temporary victory and final defeat of death. At Brooke, in Norfolk, the Expulsion from Paradise is linked up with the seven deadly sins, a more solemn indictment of humanity.* The subject appears three separate times in the *Biblia Pauperum*; as an antitype to the scene of the Annunciation, God is shown cursing the

* Deductions made from the conjunction of pictures must, however, be taken with caution. There is not much indication of any intentional and inviolable system, even the general law of O.T. subjects to the north, and N.T. subjects to the south—or to the chancel—is not by any means rigorously observed. If mediæval art were as systematic in intention as some would have us believe, inferring from the traditions existing in the actual picture-compositions, this is a factor which ought surely to have been carefully supervised too. The nearest approach to system of position is in the placing of Dooms above the chancel arch, and of Christophers opposite a door—generally the south door. But the arrangement of the *Biblia Pauperum* lends some importance to the conjunctions of O.T. pictures.

serpent, while Eve stands near ; as an antitype to the temptation of Our Lord, the temptation in the Garden is shown ; and, lastly, as our help proceeded, after the spearing of Christ, from his side, Eve proceeding from Adam's side is shown as the antitype, since it was through Eve's weakness that the fall of man, and of the human race, was brought about. For, says Durandus (p. 28) : " A woman must cover her head in church because she is not the image of God, and because by woman sin began."

The story of the Deluge is not found among the types in the *Biblia Pauperum*, and, apart from the series at Exeter Cathedral mentioned above, only appears once in English church paintings : this is at Shenley Mansell, and is probably thirteenth-century work. A painting of Abraham frightening birds from the sacrifice was uncovered at Wissett, in Suffolk, but was not preserved ; it was an illustration of the incident described in Gen. xv. 11. A portrait of Abraham among other patriarchs and prophets is found on the choir roof of Salisbury Cathedral ; and on the chancel screen at

Woolborough there is a doubtful representation of Isaac and Abraham. This lack of pictures dealing with the patriarch is strange, since the sacrifice of Isaac was constantly cited as the Old Testament type of the Crucifixion ; appearing twice in the *Biblia Pauperum*, first, Isaac carrying wood for the sacrifice, standing as a parallel to our Lord bearing the cross ; and secondly, Abraham about to sacrifice his son, as a type of the Crucifixion. Melchizedek's gift of bread and wine to Abraham was also employed in the *Biblia Pauperum*, and many other places, as the figure of the Last Supper ; * but here again Keyser's list lacks any English example. In Stanford-le-Hope Church a representation of Jacob's dream, or some subject closely resembling it, was found. It was in three compartments, the lower containing Jacob asleep with his head upon a stone, the second a draped figure ascending an incline, and the upper a single draped figure with palm-branches overhanging, as if to

* This symbolism is definitely proclaimed in the Canon of the Mass : "quod tibi obtulit summus sacerdos tuus Melchisedech, sanctum sacrificium, immaculatam nostram."

depict heaven.* One other doubtful picture (at Orleton Church) has been supposed to show Jacob feeding his flocks ; but it seems quite as likely that it may have represented the Annunciation to the Shepherds, or, perhaps, St. Joachim, father of the Virgin. Portrait-figures of Jacob also occur at Salisbury Cathedral (see Abraham, above) and on a screen at Woolborough. In the *Biblia Pauperum* the story of Jacob contributes five examples or types : the Flight into Egypt, and the return from Egypt, are typified by Jacob's flight from Esau, and his return ; the Temptation of Jesus has as antitype the selling of Esau's birthright for a mess of pottage ; the incredulity of St. Thomas is paralleled by Jacob's wrestling with the angel ; and, lastly, Jacob's dream is depicted side by side with a picture of the reward of the righteous in heaven.

Joseph, who was, with David, the most important of the Old Testament types of Christ, is represented five times in the *Biblia Pauperum*, but records of only two mural

* Keyser, p. 326. Note. Palms were symbolical of heaven ; *cf.* The Death and Burial of Mary Virgin, p. 35.

paintings of incidents of his life are found ; the first at St. Kyneburga's Church at Castor, where the sale of Joseph to the Ishmaelites is shown, the second at Bishop's Tawton, where he is shown tempted by Potiphar's wife.*

The remaining instances of Old Testament pictures may be more shortly dealt with. In every case, save that of the Queen of Sheba's visit † (which is found twice), only one example is recorded of each. The Crossing of the Red Sea is found at Exeter, in the series before mentioned ; the Brazen Serpent (type of the Crucifixion) at the Church of St. Mary de Crypt, in Gloucester ; Moses receiving the Tables of the Law, in the chantry of St. Mary at Chester Castle ; the Children of Israel gathering Manna (type of the Last Supper) at Friskney ; a figure of Samson on the Rood

* Fossey, p. 30. Potiphar's wife stands for the Synagogue, accustomed to commit adultery with strange gods. She seeks to seduce Joseph (*i.e.* Jesus), but he repulses her doctrines, and leaves his mantle at last between her hands (*i.e.* his body to the Jews). One wonders how many of a typical mediæval congregation could have benefited by such involved interpretation as this.

† David and Goliath occurs twice also, once, as specified, and at Hoxne (Suffolk).

Screen at Bradninch Church ; paintings representing Saul's entry into Jerusalem (type of the Triumphal Entry of Our Lord ?), and Saul arming David, at West Dereham Abbey; and David and Goliath (type of the Descent into Hell) at Great Yarmouth. Nathan remonstrating with David for the murder of Uriah—though this interpretation is doubtful—is found on the north wall of the nave of Catfield Church ; * the visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon appears at Gloucester, St. Mary de Crypt; and at the Chapel of the Guild of the Holy Cross of Stratford-upon-Avon, where it forms part of the series of the legend of the Holy Cross. Elijah fed by ravens was painted on a panel of the screen at Olney, but no longer exists. Jezebel at her toilet (or, far more probably, part of the story of St. Nicholas) at Pirford—Jezebel, typifying Pilate,

* Only the skirts of two figures remain, one regal, the other slight. But if the conjecture is right that the picture next to it is Our Lord and the Woman of Samaria, then the appearance together of these two themes in the *Biblia Pauperum* lends weight to the Nathan and David guess. Rev. F. Husenbeth is responsible for Keyser's attribution of this painting. Dawson Turner, B.M. Add. MSS. 23072 (Catfield). See also p. 79.

is represented in the *Biblia Pauperum*, plotting the death of Elijah. A painting which seemed to represent the feast of Belshazzar was found at Sotby, and destroyed ; and, last of all, at Warblington, in a series of the Miracles of Jesus, the three children in the furnace, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were depicted ; this miracle being accounted as performed by Christ, because " the form of the fourth was like the Son of God."

Figures of the prophets and patriarchs were, of course, quite commonly represented on the screens, and on window splays, the prophets sometimes bearing scrolls on which were displayed words from their writings quoted with especial reference to the prophetic interpretation, whereby they foretold the coming and Passion of Our Lord.* In France especially they were set up over against the twelve apostles. And the Stem of Jesse seems to have been a very popular allegorical subject, connected, apparently, with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Jesse lies asleep, from his body issues the trunk of a tree, bearing

* Mâle, vol. i. Book IV. chap. i.

on its branches the various renowned ancestors of Christ, and crowned by the Virgin and Child at its summit. Great care was often lavished upon these genealogical trees, for they lent themselves well to a decorative treatment, besides giving an opportunity of portraying the Virgin and Child, and the mediæval artists thus found a way of making mere genealogy interesting and beautiful. Keyser has nine examples of the Stem of Jesse.

The Old Testament is thus represented by twenty-one different subjects in the mural paintings, only one of which appears with any frequency: Adam and Eve have twelve pictures devoted to their story. Of those twenty-one subjects twelve are found in the *Biblia Pauperum*, though most of the others are known to have been used in allegorical senses also. It seems safe to assert that little interest was felt in the Old Testament stories for their own sake, except, perhaps, in the case of the story of Adam and Eve, which was in itself also of immense doctrinal importance, and of a more universal appeal. The core of the world's history, to the men of the Middle

Ages, was the double doctrine of the fall and the redemption of man, and the theologians were never tired of expending ingenuity—and they were very ingenious—in demonstrating the relation of all history to this central fact—the Redemption. The Legend of the Holy Cross grew up in expression of this theme, so that from a twig of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which the Angelic guard gave to Seth, and which was planted by him on Adam's grave, grew the beam which finally formed Christ's cross.* Indeed, legend went so far as to say that the scene of the Crucifixion was actually upon Adam's grave, and the skull which is so often seen at the foot of the cross is perhaps intended for our first father's. God's scheme of redemption thus fulfils itself; the fall of man is only emphasized in order to make plain the importance of the redemption. Christ's life, as we shall see, was not treated fully in art, or in sermons, as it is now. No stress was laid upon the exemplary value of his life; but upon his divinity (whence at first the importance given to the Virgin Birth) and upon

* *The Golden Legend*, iii. p. 169.

his death and resurrection, all other happenings were subsidiary ; everything known of the universe was bent and brought to this focus.

A determined symbolist will find an inner meaning in everything ; more, he will find just whatever he is searching for. It is no drawback to him that the Lion, when Samson fights against him, symbolizes the evil powers which Jesus fought, and at other times a Lion is Christ himself, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, or St. Mark, or a figure of the Resurrection. This was the usual attitude of theologians towards the Old Testament. It was, I suppose, the attitude least likely to be adopted by the ordinary layman. Order of narrative and chronology were sacrificed so that this allegory might be enforced. The Old Testament pictures, to a mind not accustomed to this artificial cosmos, are disconnected and chaotic. The parish churches would, I think, be filled with pictures of incidents which most held the popular mind. We have seen that, except in the case of Adam and Eve, the Old Testament representations are meagre enough, and we

must conclude that they did not then hold the people's interest. If this was so, was it not rather due to the arbitrary and disjointed manner in which they were considered than to any lack of power or purpose in the stories themselves ?

III

The Mary Legend

THE life of Our Lord as told by the mediæval Church differs in two essentials from that known to the early Christians, or from the gospel biography as told to-day. First in the stress laid upon the act of redemption, and all the story connected therewith, at the expense of the story of Christ's missionary work and his human example. The picture of the Good Shepherd, so common among catacomb paintings, and made familiar again to us by German art of the last century, is never to be found in mediæval churches, though, of course, it has Gospel authority. The second difference is in the emphasis given to the Virgin Mother's part in the story.

An enormous cycle of legends grew up around the small nucleus found in the evangel.

The maiden mother, to whom the commencement of St. Luke's Gospel does such high honour, quickly passes out of the story, appearing once at the wedding feast at Cana, once, when her son was preaching (Who is my mother, or my brethren ? *), and for the last time at the foot of the cross, a forlorn and tragic figure, to be commended to the care of St. John the Evangelist. Upon such slender foundations was the whole marvellous and beautiful structure of the Mary Legend built. It would be interesting to trace the growth of these stories, to inquire what connection the stress laid by St. Luke and the early Christians upon the Virgin Birth (which established the divinity of Jesus and the fatherhood of God) had with the Greek legends of the divine birth of heroes ; to study the growth of Mary's divinity, and attempt to trace Mariolatry to some deep human cause ; for the introduction of Mary worship is the humanizing of the loftier and somewhat cold doctrines that ignored the humanity of our Lord, and placed God, the Trinity, beyond all but the most trembling

* Mark iii. 33.

THE VIRGIN AND CHILD

Bishop's Palace, Chichester (13th Century)

worship. The love of God was forgotten for a long while in the mathematics of redemption by substitution ; but Christendom seems to have hungered for something more comprehensible than a theological first-cause, which was made even more perplexing by the impossibility of grasping the idea of the Trinity. From the doctrine of redemption had grown the worship of human fortitude in suffering, and of a curious combination of virginity with motherhood. In a word, Jesus had been humanized—as far as one dared do such a thing—and Mary had been correspondingly deified. Christ's divinity was deduced from his fortitude in human suffering, Mary's motherhood was made divine by the doctrine of her virginity ; Mary herself, after about 1150, was raised above all other saints and women by the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, and even further advanced by the same doctrine applied to her mother, St. Anne. The distance between God and man was thus reduced and bridgeable, as demonstrated by the Divine and human qualities mingled in Jesus and his mother.

Thus humanity gained self-respect, and might deem itself worthy of the consideration of gods who had shared human difficulties. The Franciscan movement, which removed the religious to some extent from contemplation, and made them acquainted with poverty and associated with all conditions of sorry humanity, must have done something towards propagating the religion which dwelt upon the sorrows of Mary,* and the intense suffering of the Son of Man. Celibacy of monks, and a life in cloisters where woman's voice never penetrated may have fostered the movement. It may even there have had its genesis.

It is, of course, wrong to suppose, as some have done, that Mariolatry represented an abstract reverence for motherhood. Mary was very definitely personified in their minds, and was adored, not because she was maternal, but because she was the mother of God. In their endeavour to prove her worthy of her high honour the mediævals elaborated the story of her girlhood, of the angel's annunciation of her birth, of her dedication to the temple service,

* Mâle, vol. ii. chap. i.

of her miraculous wedding with St. Joseph, and of the Immaculate Conception. Mâle, in his second volume, shows the extent to which this idea of spotlessness was carried : at the very close of the Middle Ages St. Anne, Mary's mother, began to be thus considered, and the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of St. Anne was finding currency.* As analogies to Jesus were found in the Old Testament, so symbols of the virginity of Mary were found there. She was foreshadowed by the burning bush, which burned with God's presence, but was not consumed ; by Aaron's rod that blossomed by divine intervention ; by Gideon's fleece, that was miraculously impregnated with dews of heaven when all around was unchanged ; she was the Bride of God in the Song of Songs ; the Sybils as well as the prophets foretold her ; and Virgil himself was proved to be unwittingly prophesying of her.

The gospel story of our Lord was not much elaborated, and the only apocryphal gospel to find really wide acceptance was the so-called gospel of Nicodemus, which told of Our Lord's

* Mâle, vol. ii. chap. vii. p. 226.

descent into hell. But in the matter of the minor personages of that great drama much freedom was exercised. The Death and Burial, and Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin, were immensely popular, and the story of the girlhood almost equally so. All of the Apostles have their histories, so do Mary Magdalene and Lazarus.

It will be useful to give a bare outline of the life of Mary,* which is the subject we shall next illustrate from the list of paintings. Anne and Joachim, her mother and father, had long been childless, and were so often reproached that at last St. Joachim in sorrow betook himself and his flocks to the wilderness. There an angel appeared to him and foretold the birth of Mary, and something of the high mission for which she was appointed. An angel also announced the birth to St. Anne, and Joachim returned. When Mary was weaned, at three years old, her mother took her to the temple and left her there among the other maidens dedicated to God's service. Mary distinguished herself by her devotion to study; and

* *The Golden Legend*, v. pp. 99 *et seq.*

was fed, by visitation of doves, on heavenly food. At fourteen years of age she was destined to be wedded. Men of the tribe of Judah were called upon to bring each a wand to the temple ; for God had shown the high priest that he whose rod blossomed in the sanctuary, and upon the twigs of which a dove settled, should become Mary's husband. Thus St. Joseph was chosen. Then follow the gospel accounts of the Annunciation, Salutation of Elisabeth, Nativity, with the visits of the Wise Men and the shepherds, the Flight to Egypt, and the return, and the discovery of the boy Jesus among the Doctors. Mary appears again at the Crucifixion, is present at the Deposition and Sepulture of Our Lord, receives a special visitation from him after his Resurrection,* and is sometimes found among the Apostles on the days of Ascension and Pentecost.†

A few days before her death, when the apostles were widely scattered in their work, an angel bearing a palm from heaven came to

* *G. L.* i. p. 96.

† *E.g.* in a window of East Harling Church.

announce to Mary her approaching death. She desired the presence of the apostles, and they were brought thither by a miracle.* At her death her Son came to receive the soul, and commanded the apostles to watch, after her burial, for three days by the sepulchre. At the end of the three days her soul returned to her body there, and she ascended in the flesh, was received with acclamation in heaven, where, seated beside her Divine Son, she was crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth, and Empress of Hell.

Such, in its briefest, is the story which exercised so profound an influence upon religious thought. It is interesting to notice that Caxton, in his translation of *The Golden Legend*, remarks that these are accounted apocryphal stories ; but immediately quotes what celebrated fathers and doctors have said with regard to them, and adds their high approval to all the main incidents of the life he relates.†

* *G. L.* iv. pp. 234 *et seq.*

† *G. L.* iv. pp. 241 *et seq.*, and other places.

IV

The Girlhood of Mary. The Annunciation

THE early incidents of the story of the Virgin are not now well represented in England ; the instruction of the Virgin by St. Anne alone is frequent. Of this subject there are fifteen examples given in the list ; one, at Mentmore, is as early as the thirteenth century ; but the majority are fifteenth-century work. At Slapton there existed a fifteenth-century painting of St. Anne instructing the Virgin which was painted out in the following century and the Annunciation substituted. The only example of a sixteenth-century painting of the subject occurs in the Rochford Tower at Boston, and may therefore be left out of count. Whether the single example of a palimpsest upon the picture at Slapton can be employed as an argument that

the subject of the early life of the Virgin lost influence during the sixteenth century is not very important ; for by that time pictures in churches were beginning to be destroyed by order, and scriptural quotations substituted. Keyser has numerous examples of black letter texts in churches, all of which, however, are Elizabethan. In his introduction (page lxxxvii) Keyser writes : " We have records of orders being sent out to destroy all images and to replace the paintings on the walls by texts from scripture. As an example may be mentioned the following case, viz. of Thomas Lockwood, dean of Christchurch, Oxford, who received orders in 1559 to remove all popish relics and images, and to put sentences of Scripture on the walls instead of pictures ' and other like fancies ' ; which was done." The very decoration of churches thus becomes a subject for regulation and dispute, and no longer affords a guide to popular likes and dislikes.

In Hereford Cathedral is a tomb usually described as of Dean Borew, who died in 1462, though Keyser thinks the monument to be a century earlier. On this, among other paint-

ings, is one showing the commemorated dean kneeling to St. Anne, who is instructing the Virgin. The subject also appears on the monument to Sir Peter Arderne, at Latton, painted about 1460. Artistically speaking, it is a theme of great beauty—it was chosen by the young Rossetti for his first picture—and I cannot do better than quote from Didron's "Christian Iconography" * a description of a fourteenth-century window in Fribourg Cathedral. "The divine little girl," says Didron, "wears on her otherwise uncovered head a crown of gold, and a violet-coloured nimbus; her hair, which is of golden yellow, falls in two long German tresses upon her shoulders. She is about eight or ten years old, and is clad in a green robe fitting closely to her shape. She attempts with her right hand to open her mother's blue book, that she may learn to read; but with her left she presses to her bosom a better master than even the book and St. Anne combined: she clasps the Holy Spirit, who already begins to impart inspiration

* Vol. i. p. 492. I have taken the liberty of omitting a few adjectives.

to her. The Holy Ghost is a white dove, with a golden nimbus and a black cross. The bird has just alighted on the maiden's hand, and its wings are still trembling."

Mâle, in his second volume,* mentions that there were guilds of St. Anne in France for matrons, just as there were guilds of St. Katharine for young girls ; and imputes the late popularity of pictures of St. Anne instructing the Virgin, largely to this cause. St. Anne became the motherly instructress *par excellence*.

In England, St. Joachim, the father of the Virgin, appears only once (at Harpley), and St. Anne by herself is found twice, on panels of the screens at Horsham and Wiggenhall.† This is all of the early life, the legendary girlhood, that is portrayed in England.

The Annunciation is the next event, and this proves popular and widespread. Keyser names forty-six churches which have had records of paintings of the Annunciation, but three of the

* Mâle, vol. ii. p. 202.

† The presentation of the Virgin to the Temple service is shown in the Chapel of Haddon Hall, Derbyshire, in company with St. Anne instructing her to read, the Holy Family, and the Flight into Egypt.

pictures are only doubtfully identified. The subject is a very popular one for screen panels, where it generally appears in conjunction with the Salutation (or Visitation) and the Adoration of the Magi. The usual treatment is well known. The subject is naturally divided into two parts, occupied by the Virgin and Gabriel respectively. In three instances advantage has been taken of this fact, and the picture divided between two window splays. Ordinarily a pot of flowers stands between the two figures, not, as is so often supposed, as a symbol of the purity of Mary, for this symbolism Mâle finds to be a late and applied interpretation,* as so much of such symbolism is. He rather interprets it as an indication of the season : it was in the time of flowers. But an interesting reference to the subject appears in Mirk's

* See also *Dives and Pauper* (First precept, chap. vii). "In special token the image of our Lady is painted with a child in her left arm in token that she is mother of God and with a lily or else a rose in her right hand in token that she is maiden without end and flower of all women." The very variability of the symbolism seems to me to point to the fact that it is deduced rather than intended. The expression "flower of all women" is very common. See quotation from Mirk also.

"Festial," a collection of fourteenth-century homilies translated from the French, and used during the late Middle Ages in English churches on feast days, which throws an early light on the matter; though Mirk's solution reads rather like an after-thought too.

"Thus good men, ye have now heard of this Annunciation. Then ben there some that ask why there standeth a wine-pot and a lily between our Lady and Gabriel at her salutation. This was the reason; because our Lady at her salutation conceived by sight. And that was the first miracle that was wrought in proving of Christ's faith. And it fell thus that a Christian man and a Jew sat together talking of the coming of our Lady. And there as they were, a wine-pot stood between them. Then said the Christian man to the Jew: 'We believe right as the stalk of the lily groweth, and conceiveth colour of green, and afterwards bringeth forth a white flower without craft of man or any impairing of the stalk; right so our Lady conceived of the Holy Ghost and afterwards brought forth her son without blemish of her body, that is the flower and chief fruit of all

women.' Then said the Jew : 'When I see a lily spring out of this pot, I will believe, and not before.' Then anon therewith a lily sprang out of the pot, the fairest that ever was seen. And when the Jew saw that, anon he fell down on his knees and said : 'Lady, now I believe that thou conceivedst of the Holy Ghost Jesu Christ, God's son of Heaven, and thou clean maiden before and after.' And so went, and was christened, and was a holy man afterwards. For this reason the pot and the lily is set between our Lady and Gabriel. For right as this Jew disputeth with this Christian man of the manner of the conception of our Lady ; right so our Lady disputed with the angel of the manner, and how she should conceive, and be maiden before and after." *

It is not necessary to take this as the true or original interpretation of the appearance of the pot of lilies ; but at least, in spite of the confusion at the end, it must have been satisfactory. The people of the time, then, demanded no realism in the pictures adorning their churches. The miracle of the spontaneous

* Mirk, p. 108.

growth of the lily is described as happening long after, and far removed from the scene of the Annunciation. In actual fact, at the event, there was no lily. But such an incongruous explanation was quite acceptable to the mediæval mind. The art of the thing was nothing, the interpretation everything. This quotation throws an interesting light also upon the common man's attitude to his pictures, "There are some that ask why." Assume, if you will, that the first painter to set the tradition of the pot of lilies had no symbolical intention. It was, perhaps, merely a decorative device for dividing the two points of interest, or uniting them ; nevertheless there were some that began to ask why. A reason was not hard to find—a hundred reasons could be found—and, once established, all subsequent pictures of the Annunciation would have the pot of lilies, for symbolical reasons. In an age when there were people who evinced a lively curiosity about the details of a picture, and had to be satisfied with such involved explanations as that which I have quoted from Mirk, art was bound to develop along symbolist lines. But

the traditional method of copying and copying and adhering to rules of thumb in these matters would gradually kill the symbolism, until artists would paint in the pot of lilies because that was one of the "properties" of the picture, and the erewhile curious spectator would grow so used to the lilies that it might at last never enter his head to ask why. By the time that miracle plays had provided a real pot of lilies for the scene between Gabriel and Mary there would be no symbolism left alive ; and the simple folk who saw the tall flowers waving on the high pageant where the scene was in progress, would see nothing beyond, and would conclude—for the drama has an almost deceptive influence on an unsophisticated mind—that lilies were actually in Mary's room at the very time of the angelic visit. No excuse is needed for verisimilitude, and no question is raised by it. One need look no further than the quotation from Mirk above to discover that the fact of the Annunciation was itself considered of vast doctrinal importance : "That was the first miracle wrought in proving of Christ's faith." For all the inspiration of Christ's

life as a man, and all the miracles that he wrought, were only acceptable as articles of faith when the divinity of our Lord was placed beyond doubt. High honours were allotted to the saints, and men of such pure records were worshipped,* but they were never accounted divine, in the strictest sense not even the Virgin herself, and both she and they were invariably invoked as intercessors for men with God. The Annunciation was the first and the ultimate proof of the divinity of Jesus; as such it was fully countenanced by the authorities of the Church. There were, however, two filters through which subjects for pictorial representation had to pass—the consent of the Church, and the hold on the people, and those subjects which passed both tests were necessarily the most frequently shown. But it must be remembered that the populace may have been interested in a picture from

* In *Dives and Pauper* (chap. xiii.) Pauper makes a careful distinction between the two kinds of worship: *Latria* and *Dulia*. The former is due to divine persons only, the latter to God and "reasonable creatures," and in particular to the Virgin Mary and the *manhood* of Christ. Veneration only is due to holy things (consecrated articles), out of respect for their high usage.

reasons quite other than those for which the Church employed it ; and it seems probable that the early life of our Lord, together with the Annunciation and Salutation, were popular because of the appearance in such subjects of the Virgin Mary. The Church might argue the doctrinal value of the Annunciation ; the people, on the other hand, may have liked to see this subject painted because they felt a vivid interest in Mary for her own sake, and a keen curiosity and delight in all manifestations of the miraculous.

The Visitation, or Salutation, which is the occasion when the future mother of Jesus goes to meet Elisabeth, is found in twenty-one churches according to the list. As an incident in the early history of our Lord it is often found beside the Annunciation, or the Adoration of the Magi, or both. In seven instances it is found alone. At Salisbury a painting of the Visitation is found in strange company : with two pictures of Death and a gallant, and one of St. Christopher. This, of course, is late work, towards the end of the fifteenth century. On the screen at Sparham also, there are two

separate representations of the Dance of Death, on the north side, balanced by the Salutation, and figures of St. Wulstan and St. Thomas of Canterbury. But the connection between such incongruous subjects needs no subtle explaining, for there is none whatever, despite the coincidence of Salisbury and Sparham. The Salutation is not found in the *Biblia Pauperum*, neither have I found any mention of it in Mirk's sermons. It is difficult to find any doctrinal importance or deep significance in the event ; perhaps the strongest reason lies in the fact of its being the occasion of the " Magnificat." A window at East Harling supports this ; in the Salutation there shown, Mary holds a scroll bearing the first words of her song. Its popularity may be ascribed to the opportunity, never lost, of painting our Lady, and thus doing her all honour.

V

The Bethlehem Incidents

THE actual events of the Nativity prove of far greater interest. Many people, even to-day, would agree that the simple Nativity narrative of the gospels, for beauty and tenderness, stands first in the whole cycle of Biblical story ; though it needs rather the simple mind of child or unsophisticated adult to appreciate the utmost of the tale. The stories of Ruth and Joseph are essentially adult in appeal : the interest we feel is due to sympathy and understanding of character. The Nativity story has a glamour about it which lifts it further out of the world of realities ; a supernatural air lingers. Joseph's obeisant sun and moon and stars were acknowledged dreams ; the Star of Bethlehem was a reality. Joseph, by his own virtue, and his chance, became the companion of kings ; but kings whose kingdoms were more wonderful from

the mystery and distance with which they were shrouded, came of their own accord to honour the peasant baby. Other tales were remarkable, but could be humanly explained : the tale of the birth of Jesus was wonderful, and inexplicable. God's touch fell manifestly on Earth at that time, and this made any attempt at explanation seem irreverent. Needless to say much of the poetry of the story depends upon the attitude of the reader. The folk of the Middle Ages had the unquestioning faith of the simple-minded ; they were no dilettante tasters of the art of the legend, as we are to-day when we read such tales, though they were finely sensitive to romantic beauty ; but to them, in all its details, many of which were additions of their own, the story was both ideally elevated and palpitatingly true. I write rather of the attitude of the later centuries which led up to the Renaissance, because the earlier religion was harder, a bargaining with God, with our Lord as the redeemer and judge rather than the Divine child and brother-man ; a religion of fear and trembling, and not of sentiment. But when tenderness came in, as

it was bound to do, the suffering of Jesus and his followers and friends at the Crucifixion remained as one focus of faith, and the Nativity with the thousand stories and fancies of the boyhood of Jesus and the motherhood of Mary grew into a secondary focus. While men were flying from imminent hell-fire—for so they believed—there was no time for any objective consideration of the tragic drama of the Life and Death of Jesus. The end of the Middle Ages saw the reawakening of the sense of the beauty of sorrow, the tragic sense ; and at the back of the mind of every contemplator of the tender and wondrous beauty of the Nativity, and the sweet honour of our Lady, lay the knowledge of the terrible end of the story—terrible, speaking humanly, though the apocryphal and gospel sequels gave ample reward for their sufferings, only in a place other than the earth where they sorrowed.

Tragedy is, after all, the most potent factor in human life :

"Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought."

The life and death of an obscure Jewish mystic, a story intensely tragic, and of unearthly

beauty, has exercised the most profound and universal of all influences upon mankind, and the care and elaboration bestowed upon the earlier part of the narrative (all the finely-wrought embroidery of the Middle Ages), by increasing the beauty of the beginning, served but to add to the pathos of the Passion and Crucifixion.

The Bethlehem incidents are divided into the following picture-subjects : the Birth, the Annunciation to the Shepherds, the Adoration of the Shepherds, the Adoration and Offerings of the Wise Men, the Presentation in the Temple, and the Flight into Egypt. With these strictly narrative pictures, images and representations of the Virgin and Child ought to be classified, and simple pictures of the Holy Family—making a total of more than 150 pictures and painted sculptures, according to Keyser's list. The Massacre of the Innocents —of which only four examples are found in England—appears in two of these instances as one of a Nativity series also ; and if we except these, and the scenes of the Annunciation to the Shepherds, the whole series of paintings

ANGELS APPEARING TO THE SHEPHERDS; THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM OVERHEAD

(Early 13th Century)

includes both Mother and Son, and may be legitimately used to illustrate the lives of either. As a general rule the Nativity is accompanied by an Adoration of Kings and an Annunciation. A good example of such a series appears at Winterbourne Dauntsey in Wiltshire, where, on the window splays of the north * side of the nave, the Annunciation, Nativity, Adoration of the Magi, Angel warning Joseph, Massacre of the Holy Innocents, and the Flight into Egypt, were found. Again, at Wiston Church, in Suffolk, Keyser's list gives the following note : " South wall : Annunciation, Nativity, Annunciation to the Shepherds, Adoration of the Magi, the Virgin, the Magi warned in a dream, etc." At Earl Stonham Church, Suffolk, on the east wall of the north transept, appeared : the Nativity, the Message to the Shepherds, and the Adoration of the Magi. At Loddon, on the screen, we find the Annunciation, Nativity, Circumcision, Offerings of the

* The north is unusual ; for, though the practice is too irregular to make it any rule, it might be said that the New Testament subjects generally appear on the south, the cold and dark north being regarded as the place of the Old Dispensation.

Magi, and then, out of the series, the Ascension and other subjects. At Faversham, Kent, a pillar bears the following : Annunciation, Salutation, Adoration of the Magi ; Nativity, Annunciation to the Shepherds, Presentation in the Temple ; and, on the third level, the Crucifixion (not realist, but with the Virgin on the right hand of our Lord, and St. John on the left) and the Maries at the sepulchre. This is all thirteenth-century work. So also are the paintings at Easby Church, where the " rule " just mentioned is observed—the north wall of the chancel bearing the Old Testament subject of the Creation and Fall of Man ; the south wall bearing the Annunciation, Nativity, Offerings of the Magi, Descent from the Cross, Entombment, and the Maries at the Sepulchre. Enough examples have been given to show that, in dealing with this subject, the general tendency was to make a series of pictures which recalled the whole narrative order of the infancy. We have already noted the late fifteenth-century series of panel paintings on the organ screen at Exeter. There one picture of the Nativity suffices to recall the whole of

these incidents ; for in this case, as has been said, the artist had in his mind a much more comprehensive cycle, from the Creation to the Day of Pentecost. Sometimes, where it was intended to show the life of our Lord, the Nativity alone is shown, sometimes the Nativity and the Adoration ; but nothing after that, often enough, until the Passion. At Hardham we have the Nativity, the Ascension, and our Lord in Glory, in immediate conjunction. At Faversham, the infancy, as we have seen, is fully treated, and then the Crucifixion, and a Scene of the Resurrection, are given. At Sarratt the Nativity scenes are fully shown, and immediately followed by the Resurrection and Ascension. The many other interesting incidents of the earthly life are very sparingly drawn upon. I shall give a list of them in detail later on. Even the miracles of Jesus are little represented, and this seems strange when one remembers the innumerable miracles attributed to the saints and apostles. But the difference in character between these two kinds of miracles is worth noting. Most of the apostles have to out-conjure magicians, and by

far the larger number of miracles performed by the saints are acts of an amazing and romantic nature. Jesus was never willingly demonstrative in miracle working, he refused the subtlest of the Devil's temptations, and would not cast himself down from the Temple, though it would have been a very successful way of initiating his mission, if one may judge from similar or even more striking feats performed by his followers in heathen nations.*

Before we turn, however, to the consideration of pictures dealing with the adult earthly life of Jesus, I wish to give a short account of the typical treatment of those subjects of the Nativity cycle which have been mentioned above. At East Harling Church, Norfolk, is some very beautiful and well-preserved old glass,† and this has been excellently copied in water-colour drawings preserved in the voluminous collection of Norfolk matters made

* See, for example, the legend of St. Christopher. Nearly all the legendary conversions of great numbers of pagans are wrought in this way.

† It is ascribed by the rector, the Rev. B. H. Grigson, to the fifteenth century ; it was taken down to avoid destruction in Cromwell's time, and re-erected.

by Mr. Dawson Turner during the last century, and now deposited in the MSS. Department of the British Museum.*

The subjects in choice and treatment appear to conform so well to the traditions, and the medium in which they are executed is so permanent (far more lasting, of course, than any painting in tempera, even if such painting had not further suffered under successive applications and removals of coats of white-wash), that I cannot come nearer to the actual artistry of the time, nor do better than give a description of these as examples, though of the best workmanship. The particular drawings will be found in MSS. Add. 23055.

The Nativity has for its centre of interest the new-born child lying in the manger. He is enclosed in an aureole of flame, and the manger itself seems filled with golden light. At the top of the panel a large five-pointed star hangs and pours down vertical rays upon the baby. The ox and ass are present, the ox behind the manger, and still eating from it, the ass lying down in front in full view. Mary, crowned

* MSS. Add. Nos. 23024 to 23062.

and kneeling, is to the left of the manger, and behind her, their hands clasped in adoration, stand the two midwives, Yebel and Salome.* St. Joseph kneels on the right of the manger, but part of his figure has been lost or destroyed. It is a very simple treatment of the whole subject, with no attempt at realism, save perhaps for the still-eating ox. There are no angels present. The Adoration of the Shepherds shows three shepherds, come to pay honour to the baby. It is curious to notice how a kind of parallelism between this scene and the Adoration of the Magi grew up in the mediæval mind. Gospel accounts supplied very little detail. Here, as in the Nativity panel, we find the star overhead—though the star was the guide given to the Wise Men, and not to the Shepherds.† The humble stable-background of the Nativity picture is almost completely changed : Mary sits upon a throne now, holding Jesus in her arms ; but the ox and ass are still seen in the background. One shepherd, bearing his crook, kneels before the throne, his hat in hand. The two remaining

* *Cf.* Mirk, p. 23.

† See also picture at p. 52.

shepherds stand ; one of them plays upon a strange kind of pipe ; the other carries a lamb. These are to the right of the panel (on the throne's left) and both wear their hats. In the Adoration of the Kings, again, though the composition is quite different, the Virgin is throned. The three kings, as always, are of descending ages, two bearded, one a youth. The eldest king kneels to offer a cup, of which the cover is removed and held below in his other hand. In the cup appear to be golden coins, each marked with a cross. His crown is lying on the ground beside him. The other two kings—and this, again, is common to many Adorations—are standing on the right of the throne and appear to be in conversation. They carry gold cups, the second king's being similar to that which the eldest offers, the young man's of a curious shape like an eastern lamp. The star is overhead.

The Purification, a less popular subject, is simply treated. Simeon holds the baby, while Mary advances. St. Joseph follows with candle and basket of doves ; and behind are two other men, also bearing candles. Sufficient

architectural features are given in the background to show that the scene is in the Temple.

One other scene in the childhood of our Lord is shown : the dispute between himself when twelve years old and the Doctors of the temple at Jerusalem. It is not really rightly included in the Bethlehem series, but it is the only glimpse which the gospel allows of the boyhood, and because it is an isolated incident it probably held then, as it does now, an enhanced interest. Yet not by any means so powerful, I suppose, because there was a great deal of apocryphal matter ready for the satisfaction of the faith of the mediæval searcher after truth—and this is denied us. Keyser's list gives only one example among the mural paintings,* and this is at Brook Church in Kent, a most interesting church to which I hope to revert later on. If Keyser's identification be correct, then this solitary example of the incident belongs to the late twelfth century. But almost all of the paintings in Brook Church are now faded beyond distinction, and I was

* The subject also forms the theme of a sculpture on the front of Wells Cathedral.

THE BOY JESUS AMONG THE DOCTORS

THE WISE MEN BEFORE HEROD (?)

(Brook Church, Kent. Late 12th Century. From a copy made in 1908)

not able to identify the subject (1922), though a copy made in 1908 (see plate at p. 60) leaves little doubt about the matter. The scene as depicted in the window at East Harling shows our Lord seated on a throne in the centre of a group of the Doctors, mostly bearded men with no very benevolent cast of countenance, some hotly disputing amongst themselves, some smiling superiority. Mary (alone, St. Joseph does not appear) is in full view in the foreground, anxious and evidently only just arrived. It is, I think, first of all to the boy Jesus that our eyes are directed, and then to Mary. The artist's interest seems, naturally enough, to have been mainly occupied with sympathy for her anxiety rather than with admiration at the display of boyish wisdom. It may be convenient later to have recourse to these windows for further examples, but I will here give a list of the remaining subjects so that I may guard against the false impression that the windows are devoted solely, or even mainly, to the Bethlehem cycle—for they are not.

(1) The Assumption of our Lady.

(2) The Adoration of the Kings.

(3) The Betrayal in the Garden.
(4) The Resurrection.
(5) The Marriage at Cana.
(6) The Adoration of the Shepherds.
(7) The Nativity.
(8) The Visitation.
(9) A figure of St. Barbara—a woman bearing a gold vessel.
(10) The Pietà.
(11) The Crucifixion (not symbolical).
(12) Jesus disputing with the Doctors.
(13) The Purification.
(14) The Day of Pentecost.
(15) The Ascension.
(16) The Annunciation.

This is the full list in the order in which they appear in the Dawson Turner collection. There are two other panels which are portraits of the donors. The Virgin, crowned or throned, appears in thirteen out of the fifteen subject-pictures—the Betrayal and the Resurrection being the exceptions—she appears without gospel authority in three, the Assumption, the Day of Pentecost, and the Ascension.

It does not need much temerity to suggest that the Virgin herself was the focus of interest in the whole composition.

And now, to collect these details together, let us abolish the division into two cycles which I had made as an artificial convenience only, and make a comparison of the numbers in which the respective elements of the whole narrative are represented, from the Annunciation to the last glimpse of Jesus as a boy, among the Doctors in the temple. It may be well to state here that in my classification I depend entirely upon the accounts given by Keyser ; sometimes his ascriptions are mere surmises, but as it has only been possible to see a few of the pictures that he names—indeed, many of them exist no longer—and as, also, he himself inspected them forty years ago, when, presumably, the doubts would have been less likely to arise, and, lastly, as he was a far more competent judge of these matters than I can hope to be, I make use, almost always, of his statements regarding the pictures as verified facts. Some mistakes in any case are bound to have arisen, and to arise, but they will best be minimized by

treating his list as authenticated.* For the present division of our subject then, Keyser's list yields the following figures :—

1. The Annunciation, 46 examples.
2. The Salutation, 21 examples.
3. The Nativity, 25 examples.
4. (The Holy Family, 4 examples.)
5. The Annunciation to shepherds, 6 examples.
6. The Adoration of the shepherds, 4 examples.
7. The Adoration of the Magi, 41 examples.
8. (The Magi before Herod, 2 examples.)
9. (The Magi journeying, 1 example.)
10. The Circumcision, 1 example.
11. The Presentation, 4 examples.
12. The Flight into Egypt, 8 examples.
13. (Holy Innocents, 4 examples.)
14. Jesus among the Doctors, 1 example.

N.B.—These figures refer only to existing or recorded *mural paintings*.

* I have, however, excluded examples found in buildings other than churches, and examples in Jersey and Guernsey ; and in making up the list which is printed at the end of this volume, I found it was not wise to rely upon his indexing. In nearly every case slight numerical differences may be noticed between his index and the list mentioned. I have taken all care to get my numbers correct.

I have seen the drawings, made more than fifty years ago, of the paintings uncovered in Catfield Church, and am inclined to doubt the interpretation of the examples from these included in the totals of numbers 6, 7, and 8. The solitary example of the journey of the Wise Men (9) is cited as in Brook Church, Kent. I could not definitely identify it, but am inclined to give it full credence. This little church has its walls covered with remains of mural paintings, and Keyser's surmise ascribes the above subject to one of the numerous medallions (about 2 feet in diameter) on the chancel walls.* Several of these are still clearly identified and point to the conclusion that, in its original state the chancel was a true "Gospel of the People," and *narrated*, in successive medallions, all that it was customary for folk in those days to know of the evangel, and its complementary apocryphal books. A glance at the list above will convince every one of the outstanding importance in this modified gospel of the incident of the Wise Men. I have quoted,

* See plate at p. 60.

when dealing with the Annunciation, from the collection of sermons, known as Mirk's "Festial." The only * other reference that I have met with in this book to any church picture occurs on page 49. The preacher is in the middle of an account—which itself has all the qualities, the *naïveté*, the willing belief, of a mediæval picture—of the journey of these Wise Men, and introduces the following sentence: "Then, as it in many places is painted and carven, that king that is in the middle, for great joy that he had (*they had just rediscovered the star*), wryed backward to his fellow behind, and put his hand up, showing him the star. Ignorant men have an opinion and say that he had slain a man, wherefore he turned backward. But God forbid that this opinion were true." The narration of the journeying of the Wise Men is given at full length in this sermon, and that fact itself allows the importance and popularity of this story. More than this, the collection was made for general use in any churches upon Feast Days, and yet makes specific reference to the repre-

* There is a reference to figures of St. Margaret on p. 201.

sentations of this journey. The conclusion is obvious—that the church which did not possess its picture history of the Wise Men was the exception. I do not think for a moment that a church so rich in narrative mural paintings as was Brook Church would have been without the full story on its walls.

We find, then, that in mediæval art the early part of the life of our Lord—the story of the birth—is portrayed with great care, manifest delight, and narrative force, and in very great detail. I have already pointed out the doctrinal significance of the miraculous birth. The two gospel accounts, and especially St. Luke's, are obviously given in order to differentiate between Jesus and ordinary humanity.* Great men and nobodies are all alike in birth and death ; but the story of the miraculous birth once and for all sets Jesus upon a different footing. These are the direct proofs of his divinity. Yet I do not think this to be sufficient

* It must have occurred to the genealogical enthusiasts that to close a genealogy with " which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God," only proves that there was no radical difference between Jesus and any other of Adam's descendants.

reason for the amazing attention bestowed upon the incident by the Middle Ages. There is so much more in it than doctrine. It is as full of interest from the artistic point of view as it is from the narrowly religious. That every detail was true did not lessen the sheer romance of the thing, and nobody will deny the power of romance in the Middle Ages. Love of beauty seems to me to be a more vital sentiment than creed. There was an air of terrified scrambling for salvation about their religion, and the ecclesiastical system was framed at once to satisfy this frenzy and to profit by it. But the interest felt in the Nativity stories, and the coupling of curiosity to devotion, out of which sweet legends sprang, embraced, and finally engulfed, the derivative doctrines. These pictures were there primarily because popular interest was so strong in them. I think of the advance of popularity as a few steps ahead of the advance of religious symbolism. Many great Churchmen strove hard to discountenance apocryphal stories; but what finally decided the matter, and drew from them a tacit acquiescence, was the mind of the people by whom they were supported.

VI

The Public Life of Jesus

NOTHING is further from the intention of this inquiry than any attitude of complaint against the form of religion current in the Middle Ages. Nothing, indeed, could be more barren. Nor, on the other hand, is it part of my plan to cry out upon the vanished glories of a lost age: not to praise in any partisan spirit modes so long defunct that they can heed neither praise nor censure. There is a type of mind that can be historical about literature and art, but must begin to bridle as soon as religion is mentioned. The religion of an age dies with it. No one blames a bell for ringing a man's death knell, and no one praises it for marking the close of an unhappy or incorrect life—the dead man's very dying puts a new note into his critics' pronouncements. They can now speak without

any ulterior motive: the man is alike beyond correction or encouragement. It seems to me that this is the condition of mediæval religion. There are many sincere people who call all religions that consider the gospel as good tidings by a general title of Christianity, and conclude that an attempt to estimate the religion of an age past is necessarily a comment upon its derivatives of to-day. I believe I am right in refusing to admit any such thing. Catholicism of to-day and Catholicism of the Pre-Reformation times are not the same thing; if one insists that they are, he is accusing the Roman Church of to-day of the greatest of all faults in religion—he is saying in effect that the Catholicism of to-day is dead; for the two ages, and their problems, are distinct enough. The two religions are only related; the one is the ancestor of the other; and to speak plainly either in praise or blame about ancestors ought not to awaken either umbrage or self-congratulation. It is my desire to define the artistic expression of a certain time, and, then, not to assess it by standards with which it is incompatible, but to endeavour to formulate

some theory which shall explain the existence of just such a religious formula in just such a time. But to understand a religion properly, mere objective observation is not sufficient. I must stand in dead men's shoes in order to see things as they saw them. What they found admirable I must admire ; where they were critical, too, I must be critical ; and I must emphasize whatever points they emphasized.

Let us pass, then, from the exquisite beauty of the Nativity legend, upon which so much attention was lavished, to that part of the gospel account which, as has already been mentioned, finds a much more limited currency—the Public Life of our Lord.

It is necessary to admit at the outset that the period of the missionary work of Jesus, from the Baptism to the Triumphal Entry, lends itself as a whole less easily to picturesque representation, and we must make due allowance for a kind of artistic sense, which operated in a selective way.* No finer opportunities were to

* Fossey, p. 75. Mâle remarks that in the early French art only four incidents of the public life occur, namely : the Baptism, the Temptation, the Marriage at Cana, and the Transfiguration ; and these because they are in the

be found for the display of that peculiar richness—for with all their passion for colour the taste of the mediæval artists never seems to betray them into gaudiness—than in such scenes as the Adoration of the Magi. When one considers the actual life of Christ, the preacher, from an artist's standpoint, especially that of an artist little attracted to imitative realism, it is impossible to avoid the feeling that part of the reason for the paucity of pictures of this period lies in artistic rather than religious reluctance. There was little enough of display in those three years. The disciples were all ordinary men, to whose occupations none of the glamour of majesty attached ; and much of the force of the narrative depends upon the simplicity—one might almost admit the word meanness—of their itinerant life. It makes but a poor pageant, however essential it is to the evangelical idea of Christianity.

Now, whether the priests withheld the information, or the artists found it less suitable,

Liturgy. He notices that other incidents begin to be represented at the beginning of the fifteenth century ; and this, he says, is due to the Miracle Plays, because these dramas drew from the Gospels as well as from the Liturgy.

or the people less attractive to them, is a point that ought to be decided.

The references to this part of the gospel story in Mirk's "Festial" are sparse enough, and strangely twisted to enforce curious doctrines; the attitude to them being much more allegorical than historical, just as it was to the Old Testament stories. On page 78, line 5, we find reference to the healing of a blind man, as follows: "Right so Christ himself this day in the gospel told to his disciples how he should be scorned and beaten with scourges, and done to death on the cross, and rise the third day to life. And for they should have full belief thereto anon before him he made a blind man to see that cried to him and said: 'Jesu, David's son, have mercy on me!' Then said Christ to him: 'What wilt thou that I do to thee?' And he said: 'Lord, that I may see!' Then said Jesus, 'Thy faith hath healed thee; behold forth!' and anon he saw graciously and heard God heartily. Thus must each man that will have pardon of God: he must have full contrition with shrift, and whole charity without

feigning, and steadfast belief without flattering." How little they comprehended of the real motives for miracle-working in the mind of our Lord, who always avoided even appearing to impress anyone into belief by amazing them with the supernatural! But the force of the passage for our purpose is in the application of it as a parable; the moral in this case being less strained than usual.

On page 83 is an account of the Temptation, told almost exactly as it is in the gospel, and, used, quite legitimately, to enforce fasting against the temptation of gluttony, meekness against that of pride, and lastly—but this is not deducible from the story of the Temptation, though the sin of covetousness may be that which the devil wished to arouse in Jesus when he showed him all the kingdoms of the world—liberality against covetousness. On page 95 appears the story of the Samaritan woman as follows: "Taking also ensample of a woman that came from far to Christ, as the gospel telleth, to have boot and help of her daughter that was travailed with a fiend. Then among other words when she cried to Christ, as the

gospel telleth, to have help, he answered and said : ' It is not good to take bread of children and give it hounds to eat.' But this rebuke this woman took meekly and said : ' Yes, Lord, for whelps eat of crumbs that fall from their lord's board.' Then said Christ : ' Woman, thou art of great belief ; wherefore as thou wilt, be thy daughter whole.' This woman and this daughter betokeneth a man that hath his conscience travailing with the fiend of deadly sin that may no way be helped, but if he go to God and Holy Church, and openly shrive him to the priest, sparing no rebuke, neither for shame nor dread ; but meekly suffer what the priest saith, and take his penance devoutly ; and so shall he be delivered of the fiend that travaileth his conscience." A most ingenious perversion of the point of the story to enforce the importance of a sacrament of the Church that men were all too loath to perform. The insertion of " Holy Church " is an illuminating touch. But it is again important to note how unessential the preacher considered the historical point of view: this was nothing more than a parable to him.

In the next sermon, page 96, line 10, we find another instance : " Wherefore," says the preacher, " we read in the gospel of this day how our Lord Jesu Christ cast out a dumb fiend of a man ; and when the fiend was out, then the man spake. Then shall ye understand by this dumb man all that have no power in their tongue to shrive them of idle oaths, of idle words, and of idle thoughts that a man with delight occupieth his heart in."

On page 103, line 35, is a passing reference to the Feeding of the Five Thousand : " But he that will thus do (*i.e. live virtuously according to the ten commandments*), he must be fed of Christ with five loaves and two fishes as we read in the gospel, how he fed five thousand of people with five loaves and two fishes. The first loaf of these five is contrition of heart, the second is true shrift of mouth. The third is satisfaction of his trespass (*i.e.* penance) ; the fourth is ' redemacion,' that is, of turning again from his sin; for he that is always afraid he shall do well. The fifth is perseverance in God. The two fishes be orisons and alms-deeds, for these are nourished in tears of devotion. These two

sisters get whatever they will of him." Surely the most remarkable application of the story of the feeding of the five thousand ever encountered. It betrays, we may notice by the way, how firmly rooted was the love of numbers and classification in the mediæval mind.*

The references to the public life in Mirk are not numerous, the examples I have given show how cursorily they are introduced, with nothing of the pomp of the countless more marvellous tales of knights and kings and saints and devils which the preacher drew from such voluminous collections as the *Gesta Romanorum*, or the *Legenda Aurea*. Here are the figures of the mural paintings recorded by Keyser as dealing with the same interim between the Incarnation and the Passion Week :

Baptism	2
Temptation	2
With the Rabbi (preaching)	1
With the woman of Samaria	3

* *Cf.* On the Advent of our Lord—the opening of the first chapter of Caxton's translation of the *Golden Legend*, which exemplifies this method delightfully.

Miracles, 12, viz. :	
Peter's wife's mother	1
Casting out a devil	1
Miraculous draught of fishes . .	2
Raising of Lazarus	3
Feeding the five thousand	1
Walking on the water	2
Unspecified in the list	2
Transfiguration	5
House of Simon the Leper	2

Even these figures are unsatisfactory ; but they are as near to certainty as I can arrive. Of the two Baptisms, one is reproduced in Dawson Turner collection (Crostwight Church), the other appears in the series on the organ screen at Exeter Cathedral ; a series already cited several times, and of the fifteenth century. The second of the Temptation pictures was at Winterbourne Earls ; but the identification is doubtful. So also is one of the three pictures of Our Lord with the Woman of Samaria—that, namely, at Catfield Church.* It is the lower fragment of a painting only, and shows

* See p. 23, note.

the lower portions of two figures, one male, with bare feet, and the other perhaps a woman's skirt. There is a narrow-necked small vase standing on the ground, and it is this which led to the conjecture. However, it seems a very unpractical waterpot. Of the miracles, the first is recorded as identified in Brook Church, Kent ; I could not find it. Those marked as unspecified are two series of miracles not mentioned in detail ; the series at Warblington includes the miracle of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, as one of those performed by our Lord—the other series does not appear in a church, but in Sherborne Almshouses. There are three apparently doubtful pictures among the five Transfigurations. The one at Chester Cathedral had not been seen by Keyser ; he prints the two quotations from which his supposition is derived. One (Dingley's *History from Marble*, p. 132) describes it as " a curious piece of painting and guilding against ye wall, of Simon Fypley, Abbot, made kneeling praying to the Virgin, with a glory about her head, standing between Moses and Elias, at her feet St. Peter kneeling with the

keyes, and St. John." The other, from Ormerod's *History of Cheshire*, i. 215 (first edition), calls it the history of the Transfiguration. It appears, from his description, that Dingley's interpretation was wrong. On the screen at Westhall are three panels, Jesus in the centre, and Moses and Elias, one on each side : a conjunction which at least suggests the subject. Keyser's note on the other doubtful Transfiguration is "on the sedilia, paintings of Elias and other subjects, probably the Transfiguration." The anointing of Christ's feet by Mary Magdalene in the house of Simon the leper is found twice, at Notgrove and Winterbourne Dauntsey. There is a third mentioned in the list ; but as it is in Guernsey, I have not included it. Altogether it is an amazingly poor presentment of this period of the life of Jesus, and, it is necessary to remember, such scenes as these, since they had canonical authority, may not have suffered at the hands of the reformers to the same extent as those pictures of the Virgin or of the saints—yet these latter far outnumber them even to-day. It is scarcely possible to avoid the conclusion

that this part of the gospel story was never adequately set forth in the poor man's Bible. That other so-called *Biblia Pauperum* (a name which Chatto, in his *History of Wood-Engraving*, p. 82, considers a misnomer, preferring rather *Biblia Pauperum Predicatorum*, chiefly because of its similarity with the *Speculum Humanæ Salvationis* which, as he quotes, is expressly compiled " propter pauperes predicatores ") contains almost precisely the same list : Baptism in Jordan, Temptation, Raising of Lazarus, Transfiguration, and Mary Magdalene at the feet of our Lord. The Temptation has as antitypes Esau selling his birthright, and Adam and Eve eating of the forbidden fruit, so the *Biblia Pauperum* enforces the same lesson as Mirk. In the case of Mary Magdalene, the Old Testament types are Nathan making David repent of his sin, and Moses curing the leprosy of Miriam, types which leave no doubt of the particular lesson embodied for them in the scene in the House of Simon the Leper. The types of the Transfiguration are curious ; the three angels with Abraham, and the three children in the

furnace. The only connection seems to be in the number three, a number of no light significance to the mediæval mind. Since the appearance of three angels to Abraham was generally quoted as an Old Testament argument in favour of the doctrine of the Trinity, it seems to follow that the other two examples are also intended to refer to the same complex and inexplicable doctrine. Of the teachings and parables of our Lord, Dives and Lazarus is found twice, at Ulcomb and Winchfield, and the Prodigal Son once, at Brooke, Norfolk. In the *Biblia Pauperum* the Wise and Foolish Virgins appears, somewhat incongruously, as the type of the Jews seeking Christ in Gethsemane, and the Prodigal Son, equally incongruously, as the type of our Lord revealing Himself to the disciples; in which the Prodigal, I suppose, represents the disciples, who had fled from their master at his arrest, and the father stands for Jesus. I cannot find any other reference,* save one in Mirk, to the

* Mâle mentions only four parables found in French art: the Good Samaritan, the Wise and Foolish Virgins, the Prodigal Son, Dives and Lazarus.

parable of the Sower, where the novel interpretation is given that the sowing is alms-giving: "Wherefore his seed falleth beside the way that giveth his alms not only for Christ's love, but for pomp of the world, and vainglory, and forto be holden a holy man ; and so loseth all together."

It is hard to explain these lacunæ satisfactorily. I have already hinted at some plausible reasons for a mediæval artist's neglect of the scenes. But artists were men of their time. I have also pointed out in an earlier chapter how little of the evangelical there was in mediæval religion, and have dwelt upon the passion of the multitude for colour and pageantry ; priests and laymen were men of their time too. The public did not demand, the artists did not paint, the clergy did not preach, much of the day-by-day life and teaching of Jesus—

> "They all were looking for a king
> To slay their foes and lift them high."

Their foes were Satan and his angels, hell their dread, and heaven their high hope. To this end, it seems to me, they emphasized the

honours paid to Jesus and his mother, the power exercised by him, and the process by which he effected their salvation. Piers Plowman's preaching of the gospel of "Dowel" and Langland's heraldic identification of Piers Plowman, a man of the commonalty, with Jesus, shows an understanding, rare in his day, of an aspect of Christianity for which, in the days of chivalry and slavery, there seems to have been no call.

VII

The Ideal of Suffering. The Treatment of the Passion

SYMBOLISM, a device by which men have tried to look out through the material to the immaterial, to endow simple finite signs with a quality of the infinite, is always beset with a danger due to human short-sightedness. It is intentionally the vehicle for man's intensest faiths, and so long as he can argue thus in his own mind it remains nothing more than symbolism. But faith and reason go ill together, and in the ecstasy awakened after his reasoning beyond the symbol, man is apt to kick away the ladder of logic. The symbol then loses its double state and becomes an idol or an amulet.

Now art comes into this question of symbolism and idolatry in an interesting way. Setting aside all the theories of the artist mind,

and the emotion-content of his productions, there is one thing about the artist (in paint, or wood, or stone) that is incontrovertible—his preoccupation with form, that is, with a sense impression. He is at least as much a craftsman as a poet; and his craftsmanship is definitely measurable. Whatever other developments his art undergoes, his technical development will be material and visible. To advance in technique is, in this sense, to advance as an artist.* On the other hand, comparing the crudest Saxon crucifix, cut by a mason almost devoid of sensibility, with the most elaborate, anatomically perfect and agonized crucifix of an accomplished artist, we have not an advance, but a retrogression, in symbolism; for the more perfect the expression and execution, the more *opaque* the symbol becomes. The more a man is occupied with the visible symbol, the less he is occupied with its inward and spiritual symbolism. The one ascertainable line of advance for an artist is definition; but definition destroys symbolism. Thus the

* Since the mediæval artist stood as a craftsman pure and simple, this is the line of advance for him.

development of technique in art is, inevitably, the degradation of symbolism.

There is nothing static in the religion of the Middle Ages. It is unfortunate that of the numerous examples of palimpsest paintings recorded by Keyser, the order has never been sufficiently carefully recorded to allow of any general deductions as to these changing fashions. But the fact that such things happened throws an interesting light upon the attitude towards church ornamentation, and argues that it was more than mere dead decoration. Enough interest must have been taken in the paintings to make the changes desirable, and the art of the work did not always improve: a good picture might be replaced by a less good. The interest in the decoration was not æsthetic—certainly not consciously so — but religious. The development of Mariolatry has already been referred to as an indication of the direction in which religious thought moved. An equally instructive comparison may be made between early and late representations of the central event of the Passion of our Lord. Early Crucifixions are never touched with the slightest

sympathy or realism: the body of Jesus, defying gospel accounts, is fully robed, often in pontifical garments. He is not hung upon the cross, but lies upon it, his arms horizontal, identifying the bodily shape of man with that of the cross. There is no attempt at expressing anguish: obviously none was considered necessary. It is a passive formula.

Much later (both Mâle and Didron give examples), we find a more elaborate symbolism. On each side of the cross stands the figure of a woman: the one, with sceptre and crown falling, is the Synagogue,* the other, on the right of Christ, is the Church. Then a curious blending of fact and doctrine appears, which is a covert step away from symbolism. The Virgin Mary replaces the figure of Holy Church, and St. John the Evangelist the figure of the Synagogue. Theologians applied themselves to this, and agreed that St. Mary might legitimately so stand, because she was the only one who believed, at the hour of the crucifixion, and in her heart lay, at that

* See plate opposite.

FIGURE OF THE SYNAGOGUE

Chapter House, York Cathedral (13th Century)

moment, the whole of the Church.* But Mary and John were really present, and Mary's figure claimed more than a mere recognition of doctrine.

The denuding of the body of Jesus proceeds : men began to study the anatomy of agony there. His head droops ; blood issues from the five wounds ; his body sags under its own weight ; the crown of thorns is added ; and the abdominal muscles reveal the intensity of his suffering. At the same time the number of people at the foot of the cross increases. The Virgin, fainting, is now supported and comforted by St. John, and Mary Magdalene kneels at the foot. The centurion, St. Longinus, and other soldiers are shown, sometimes riding on horseback ; and in some examples crowds of mockers fill the background. The two thieves are also represented —and the thing becomes an unbearable orgy

* St. John stands for the synagogue by the following lame and somewhat involved apology. He arrived first at the sepulchre, but was not willing to enter, so Peter entered before him (John xx. 4 ff.). The synagogue, which was the first established Church, gives way to St. Peter, the head of the Christian Church (Fossey).

of suffering.* Hand in hand with this development of sensibility to suffering went the growth of *tendresse* in treatment of the early life of Jesus. As I have said, the one enhanced the other, and both were symptoms of a deep psychological change.

The interest in martyrdoms and tortures is further evidence of this change of mood. Mâle, who has drawn attention to the change in his second volume, attributes it, and with a ring almost of finality, to the Miracle Plays, and these, in turn, to a curious kind of literature, written to be read by nuns, of which he gives the type in the *Centum Meditationes* of the pseudo-Bonaventura. It would, I think, be preferable to say that in this literature the new spirit first becomes manifest ; for I feel that neither monkish romancer nor actor, nor artist, was more than a mouthpiece of the hour he lived in. In this, as always, the Church often made some effort to stem the tide, at least in the matters of new legends, and of miracle plays ; but she was powerless, and the change came

* See, for example, No. 1049 National Gallery, a crucifixion (of German origin), fifteenth century.

only when the people were ready for it, the world making use of "accidents"—Luther, or Calvin, or Henry VIII—in ordering its recession from the excess of sentiment. Perhaps, too, the pronounced agnosticism which assailed the great men of the Renaissance lent men new eyes, through which they became aware that their over-indulgences in sensibility were repulsive beside the quiet mien of the classics. Michelangelo made Jesus heroic in suffering, and stern in the Last Judgment; and Dürer pointed men to the dark acquiescence of the *Melencolia*.

There is, however, a great difference between the expression of horror and the morbid indulgence of sadness. In German and English pictures of the Passion there is a character, almost of ugliness, which shows a kind of fiery protest against the suffering they depict. There is none of the diseased sentiment which prompts the following utterance, from the Revelations of St. Bridget—fourteenth century—which is quoted by Mâle in the same connection: "Il était couronné d'épines, ses yeux, ses oreilles et sa barbe ruisselant de

sang—ses mâchoires étaient distendues, sa bouche ouverte, sa langue sanguinolente. Le ventre, ramené en arrière, touchait le dos, comme s'il n'avait plus d'intestins."

From what has long been called the type of an Englishman : that he is self-restrained, even to a fault, in the matter of displaying his feelings—a generalization which seems to be borne out by national history, for natural conservatism is bound up with this trait, and our renaissance came late and slowly, and our revolutions have been effected with less violence and greater certainty than those in other lands—it is not surprising to find that the subject which proved the consummation of woe and suffering on the Continent, the *Pietà*, is only poorly represented in England. But it is necessary to go warily here : the popularity of this particular theme—the Virgin sustaining the dead body of our Lord—is due, in part, to papal authority, which attached great merit to the picture, and conferred great spiritual benefits upon those who prayed before such representations. This, together with the harrowing nature of the theme, would make

such pictures the first objects of puritan attacks ; and the small number of examples in this instance, it might be argued, is due to destruction. It is, moreover, necessary to note that the excessive popularity of the *Pietà* is late, and that the English reformation began early. But to explain their rarity by the theory of puritan destruction would be to overlook the possibility of as great an error on the opposite side. Many pictures, even of mariolatrous intent or apocryphal origin, have survived, or—to speak more accurately—have been rediscovered. Whitewash was the general puritan remedy, and whitewash comes off. Moreover, the majority of the mural paintings recorded by Keyser, those least likely to have sustained injury from this cause, if the puritan fervour had been at all consistent as to subject, as well as the more obviously objectionable, have been found thus temporarily obliterated. Of the nine *Pietà* pictures named in Keyser, five are mural paintings, one is painted sculpture, and three are screen panels. The Coronation of the Virgin, which, naturally enough, would also rouse the ire of the iconoclasts, is represented

by twenty-one examples. The *Pietà* necessarily held an important place in Mâle's treatise, and, in general, I have found the deductions made from Keyser tally surprisingly well with those which Mâle has made from French sculpture and painting.* In this matter of the *Pietà* alone I seem to notice a divergence. I am therefore inclined to treat the number here as no exception, but as a ratio no less true than the others. And I should tentatively assign the difference to no ecclesiastical cause —for the Church at least aimed at unity, and this subject had strong papal arguments in its favour—but to the difference in temperament between French and English. In short, the Church might try to be as universal as her name; but despite Latin and the Papacy, a church of Englishmen and a church of Frenchmen would never be equal at all points: the sun shines alike on oak and elm, but these retain their ingrain differences.

At St. Lawrence's Church, Broughton, Bucks, a mural painting of the *Pietà* was discovered ; it was of the time of Richard II, and

* N.B.—Mâle, however, does not always give statistics.

is thus described in the *Archæological Journal*.* "The body of our Lord, in a dismembered state, is seen, supported by the Virgin Mary. The feet and hands of Christ are torn off, and the flesh greatly lacerated. One or two of the surrounding personages are holding the detached limbs, and another has the heart in his hands." It needs some courage to visualize this and place it in imagination beside a French sculptured *Pietà*. The subtle beauty of the Virgin's sorrowful face, and the poor passive human body of Jesus, in the French treatment, compared with the violence, and crudity, and crass inaccuracy of the English example, are apt to deceive one's faculties. But consider it coldly: the difference in technique is enormous, and it is not voluntary; the French artist is luxuriating in his grief, the Englishman, in so far as he expresses any personal feeling, is protesting against the cruelty; for ugliness is an artist's protest. Further, the Broughton *Pietà* is clearly provocative—it directly prevaricates: "Not a bone of his body shall be broken": and here his body is

* Vol. vi. p. 176.

dismembered and made ghastly. An explanation is sought instinctively, and is to be found in symbolism. It was this *Pietà* which afterwards became the harmless heraldic device of the five wounds—two hands, two feet, and a heart, upon a shield.

Perhaps it is not possible for an Englishman to give an unbiased judgment ; yet I cannot help feeling that, of the two methods of approaching the theme, that adopted by the French led them into dangerous places ; and, despite its horror, I believe the English example to be saved from any taint—by its very ugliness. Yet, as paradox must come into any argument that is based on instinct, for what appear to be very opposite reasons, I wish to place here, and praise unstintedly, a quotation from Mirk * on a closely allied subject, only remembering that these sermons themselves had a French origin. I give it mainly because of its beauty; but, coming here, it will form an interesting counterpart to the quotation in French above.

" Wherefore God complaineth grievously

* Pp. 112, 113.

THE FLAGELLATION

Retable in Norwich Cathedral (late 14th Century)

by this holy prophet Jeremy and saith thus : ' What guilt found your fathers why that they wenten fro me ; if I have trespassed to you in anything, tell me ! ' Alas, for shame to your pride, God is in the right. And yet he treateth with you that ben in the wrong ; he proffereth mercy ere we it ask ; he meeketh him to us that displeaseth him, and sheweth love where none is worthy. Thus bin our hearts harder than stones, thus bin we worse than Jews, thus bin we unkind to him that showeth all manner kindness, and ever crieth to us, and saith thus : ' I am lift on high, for all should hear me speak. Come again to me, and I will receive you. Lo, mine arms ben spread on broad ready to clip you ; my head is bowed, ready to kiss you ; my side is open, to shew my heart to you ; my hands and feet bleed, to shew you what I suffered for you. And yet you turn away and grudge to come to me, and if ye will not come to me for love, come for gifts. Come to me, and I will give you treasure without number ; I shall advance you without comparison : I will give you life and rest and peace

without end, so that all the default shall be in you, and not in me."

It is not right, however, that this passage, with all its beauty of symbolism, and its majesty of phrasing, should stand as a pure representative. I have chosen it because it seems to deserve more than obscurity. As so often happens with the obsolete literatures, passages of true sublimity, such as this, seem pertinent in any age ; it is as though the very language used gains immortality thereby. This might be transcribed almost word for word, and slipped into a modern sermon, where it would be noticeable, less for any quaintness of outworn ideas than for its shining sincerity. But Mirk's sermon on Good Friday contains more realism, and would not contrast so markedly with the quotation in French ; yet it would contrast with it even then.

The treatment of the theme of the Passion is generally in a series of narrative pictures, and the chronology of events is closely followed. The figures from Keyser, which I give below, contain nothing surprising. In the order of numerical importance the various subjects

range themselves very much as they would do according to current ideas of to-day :

(*a*) Crucifixion	82
(*b*) Our Lord in Glory	41
(*c*) Resurrection	37
(*d*) Betrayal, etc.	34
(*e*) Deposition	18
(*f*) Ascension	16
(*g*) Last Supper	14
(*h*) Entombment	12
(*i*) Descent into Hell	10
(*j*) *Pietà*	9
(*k*) *Noli me Tangere*	7
(*l*) Triumphal Entry	6
(*m*) Incredulity of St. Thomas ..	3
(*n*) Washing the disciples' feet ..	2

Of those who, applying present-day notions to mediæval religion, find that the latter falls short, not the most exacting would find much room for complaint here, I believe ; at least until they came to examining the pictures for which the figures stand. Let us apply to the list the Apostles' Creed : " Suffered under Pontius Pilate " (*d*) " Was crucified " (*a*) " dead " (*e*)

—the deposition of Jesus is important as establishing this article—"and buried" (*h*) "He descended into hell" (*i*)—though the authority for these pictures is the Gospel of Nicodemus—"The third day he rose again from the dead" (*c*) "He ascended into heaven" (*f*) "And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father" (*b*). But this is rather hinted at than shown. The mediæval artists in general, and the English artists in particular, either from reverence or inability, did not often venture upon the figure of the Father, who had never been manifested to human sight, as the Son and the Holy Ghost had been.

Apart from the Last Supper, it will be immediately seen that this portion of the creed is most fully represented, and that the numerical arrangement constitutes, without any further changes, a division of subjects into those found, and those not found, in the Apostles' Creed—an interesting result, and worth noting as evidence in support of the approximate accuracy of the ratios of these mural paintings.

For those, likewise, who attack the defunct Church for its Mary worship, this section taken

alone gives little handhold. The possible pictures in which the Virgin could have appeared are five : Crucifixion (almost always) ; Deposition and *Pietà ;* Entombment ; and sometimes, without authority, in the Ascension. Of these, only the *Pietà* can conceivably have been treated as a theme doing first reverence, or undue reverence, to the Virgin ; and the *Pietà* is surprisingly rare.

Of the remaining pictures, the *Noli me Tangere* is evidence of the actuality of the Resurrection ; so is the Incredulity of St. Thomas, concerning which Mirk speaks as follows (p. 18) : " Thus the tarrying of Thomas' belief brought us into full belief, and to the benison of Jesus Christ. Of this saith St. Gregory thus : ' Much more Thomas of Inde helps me to faith, that would not believe, till he had handled and groped the wounds of Christ, than Mary Mawdlen that believed anon at the first time.' Thus Thomas proved our faith." The reference to Mary Magdalene, and the contrast between the deep-touching of Thomas with the *noli me tangere* of the scene at the tomb, shows the connection, in the mediæval

mind, of these two subjects. By a curious twist of mind (something the same as that which is deducible from the allegorical attitude of the preacher in treating of the gospel history), one of the things for which St. Thomas is to be venerated is his imperfect faith ; the comparison might seem to blame Mary Magdalene for a faith more perfect—only the mediævals were never too logical in their deductions or interpretations: "Thus far and no farther," they could say to their curiosity, and the desire died.

Turning now to the Crucifixions, we find that Keyser's descriptions of these pictures are unfortunately rather meagre. Only one of all the eighty-two has sufficient data to identify it as a realistic attempt ; this is on the east wall of Fowlis Easter Church, Perthshire, and in it the two thieves are shown, "and numerous other figures." By good fortune I was able to verify this by inspection of the picture. It is a large painting on wood, measuring about fourteen feet by six, and resembling, especially in the figures of the two crucified thieves, the German example (No. 1049) in the National Gallery. By the

THE CRUCIFIXION, WITH THE VIRGIN AND ST. JOHN

From a pier in the Nave of St. Alban's Cathedral (15th Century)

thief on our Lord's right a small angel hovers in the air, by him on the left is a black demon. The picture is crowded with figures—there are more than twenty, all told: Mary Magdalene, St. John, the Virgin, together with the high priest and many soldiers. Much blood is pouring from the wounds of Jesus. The two thieves are terribly contorted, their arms being bound over the arms of the crosses, their legs broken, showing horizontal wounds. There is not, however, much expression of violent grief among the spectators. This example of realism is, I believe, unique amongst all those crucifixions noted by Keyser. On the other hand, sufficient indication is given in many cases, to gather that the treatment is purely formal, sometimes not much more than a crucifix, sometimes with the two opposed figures of the Virgin and St. John, a manner of treatment which is never realistic.* An unusual variation of this idea, which adds a little to the probability of the symbolism of these two figures, occurs at Winchester, St. John's ; where, instead of the Virgin and St. John, St. Francis of Assisi

* See plate at p. 102.

represents the new, and Isaiah the old laws, respectively. At Newport, Essex, is a fine panel example ; it occurs on the lid of the church chest, and is in unusually good preservation. Here, our Lord on the cross occupies the central compartment ; the Virgin and St. John the next two divisions to right and left, and then St. Peter and St. Paul with their appropriate symbols.

The Crucifixion occurs quite frequently, and quite formally, upon fonts, the artists being continually disconcerted by the fact that a font must have eight sides,* while the sacraments of the Church amounted to no more than seven. The eighth panel seems never to have been definitely decided upon. The Baptism of our

* Durandus, etc. Eight is the number of regeneration. Thus God completed the creation in six days, rested on the seventh, and the eighth day *begins* the new week. It is also worth noting that an eight-sided stone figure is a great deal easier to set out and construct in stone than a seven-sided polygon. Inference as to the validity of the symbolist's argument about octagonal fonts is left to the reader. Almost every point of symbolism is weakened, rather than strengthened, by reference to the artist's or mason's purpose or convenience. Durandus himself, nearly always, obviously lays his symbolist's finger upon work made by an artist without any deep didactic motive.

Lord, though appropriate, was not always satisfactory, since baptism was already one of the sacraments.

It remains for me to give some idea of the usual *series*, and I shall content myself with instancing two churches, at West Chiltington and Winterbourne Dauntsey, the paintings in both of which are largely thirteenth-century work, and the sequence unusually well preserved. In each case it will be most useful to give all of the Biblical narrative pictures whether in the particular section now under consideration, or in those already dealt with. The pictures are as follows:—

West Chiltington, Sussex.	*Winterbourne Dauntsey, Wilts.*
The Annunciation.	The Annunciation.
The Salutation.	
The Nativity.	The Nativity.
Annunciation to Shepherds.	
Adoration of Magi.	Adoration of Magi.
	Angel appears to Joseph.
	Flight into Egypt.
	Massacre of the Innocents.
	Our Lord anointed by Mary Magdalene.
Triumphal Entry.	
Last Supper.	Last Supper.
Betrayal.	Agony in the Garden.

West Chiltington, Sussex.	*Winterbourne Dauntsey, Wilts.*
Scourging.	Mocking and Scourging.
Bearing the Cross.	Bearing the Cross.
Crucifixion.	Crucifixion
	Descent into Hell.
Maries at the Sepulchre	Maries at the Sepulchre.
Resurrection.	Resurrection.
Our Lord in Glory.	Our Lord in Glory.

Filling in the gaps of each from the other, we shall have a typical life of Christ as known to those folk for whom this "Bible" was portrayed—the emphasis typical, the lacunæ typical. Brook Church in Kent is the only one recorded by Keyser in which these limits were possibly extended.

THE RESURRECTION

Reredos in Norwich Cathedral (late 15th Century)

VIII

The People's Creed

WITH the Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus, the redemption of mankind is complete. In his Death he satisfied the cries of eternal Justice for punishment of human sin, according to the religious system of the Jews, by the shedding of blood. In his Resurrection he gave a living symbol of hope to all men, having not only conquered our common enemy, Death, but hell itself, whence he rescued many patriarchs and good souls, among whom Adam and Eve were prominent.* The so-called Gospel of Nicodemus, attributed to two men who came from their graves at the hour of the Crucifixion, received full credence in the Middle Ages, and came to be an important part of the Miracle Plays. By his Ascension Jesus returned to

* See, for instance, Dürer's woodcuts of this subject.

heaven in human form, and so glorified that common flesh he took, that mankind might henceforth claim a nearer kinship with God, and a higher station than the angels, all of whom now made obeisance before a God of woman born.* With that last act, God's doings with men directly are closed until the day of Doom. But the Virgin remained on earth for a time, and the close of her story is well represented in mediæval art. The table of figures shows that the Assumptions and Coronations greatly outnumber the Death and Burial scenes. In a former chapter I have given a summary of the legends concerning the close of her life. Both the Assumption and Coronation (or sometimes the two subjects are shown as one) tend to become iconolatrous rather than narrative pictures : they show the Virgin at her nearest to divinity. In the Assumption she is often enclosed in an aura, an attribute otherwise confined to deities, and surrounded by angels, much as our Lord is shown in pictures representing him in glory. That confusion was possible is shown by the quotation given in

* Mirk, p. 153, l. 14. *De Ascensione Domine Nostri.*

Keyser, p. 306, and already noted,* in which the old writer mistook the central figure in the Transfiguration picture for that of the Virgin. Mâle gives interesting reproductions of woodcuts representing the Immaculate Conception, which certainly have an idolatrous tendency. God the Father broods above (as he does in scenes of the Baptism) and sometimes the dove is below him ; Mary is shown as a thought of God, a maid surrounded by the usual emblems drawn from all kinds of Old Testament passages, especially the Song of Solomon—the well, the mirror, the star, the gate, and so on—upon her bosom is traced an aura which encloses the infant Jesus, for the bearing of whom she was set apart and predestined,† according

* See p. 79.

† Didron (vol. ii. p. 60) quotes an ancient protest against excesses in this kind of picture, as follows: "On se doit bien garder de paindre faulsement une histoire de la Sainte Escriture tant que bonnement se peut faire. Je le dy partie pour une ymage qui est aux Carmes et semblables, qui ont le dedens leur ventre une Trinité, aussi comme toutte la Trinité eust prins char humaine en la Viérge Marie. Et, qui plus merveille est, il y a enfer dedans peint, et ne voy point pour quelle cause on œuvre ainsi ; car en mon jugement, il n'y a beaulté ne dévocion en telles paintures ; et ce doit estre cause d'erreur et de indignation ou indévocion."

to the doctrine, before time was. In the case of narrative pictures, the only kind with which I have dealt in this treatise up to the present, the preoccupation with narration generally saved the artists from any excesses of this sort ; but they found it impossible, naturally enough, to touch upon the themes of the Assumption and Coronation, where Mary is the central figure to whom honour is paid, without endowing her with some divine and worshipable qualities. They had been occupied so long with consideration of her sorrows, that this, her consummation, they painted with manifest delight ; and there is a great deal of beauty to be found, especially in scenes of the Coronation, where her Divine Son, seated beside her, crowns her for all time, Queen of Heaven and Earth.*

Up to the present we have found pictures in which the Virgin appears as follows :

(*a*) Early life till Annunciation and Salutation.

(*b*) Nativity, Infancy, and Childhood of our Lord.

* See plate opposite. This picture, which is at St. Albans, does not do justice to the theme. Its colour is degraded and its execution trivial. But it was the only copy of the scene available for reproduction.

CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN

St. Alban's Cathedral (13th Century)

(*c*) The marriage-miracle at Cana.

(*d*) The Passion scenes, Crucifixion, and *Pietà*.

(*e*) Ascension, and Pentecost.

(*f*) Death, Burial, Assumption, and Coronation of the Virgin.

Images of the Virgin and Child (which were nothing less than idols *) appear, of course, very often, both alone, and as the summit of the Trees of Jesse. Lastly, as we shall find later, the mother of our Lord appears in almost all pictures of the Doom, kneeling on the right of Christ in Majesty, showing her breast, pleading her maternity, and supplicating for mankind. For the mediævals evolved a curious

* "There was a widow whose only son was taken and bound in prison. And she cried night and day to the Virgin to deliver him, but had no answer. Thereupon she went into the church and said to the image of our Lady: 'Blessed maiden, I have prayed often for the deliverance of my son, and have received no help. Wherefore since you will not help me to regain my son, I will take yours instead of mine, till you send mine home'; and took the image that was on our Lady's knee and carried it home. The night following the Virgin came to the widow's son in prison and set him free, telling him to bid his mother to restore to Mary her baby" (Mirk, p. 248). The story is first told by Cæsarius Heisterbach, about 1230.

procedure of appeal to the ultimate and but dimly-recalled God the Father.* The system was that their appeals were carried as by proxy; from themselves to their patron saint, from the patron saint to the Virgin, from the Virgin, who always pleads her love and motherhood, to her son, and from Jesus, who pleads his wounds, to the Father. But in representing the Day of Judgment the painters very literally adhered to the definite teaching of the Church, and Jesus becomes the judge, and God the Father never appears. The humanization of God—call it anthropomorphism—seems to me to be so obviously the line of development of mediæval religious thought, that I may be excused a little digression on this point.

" Think of a white cloud as being holy," says William Blake, " you cannot love it ; but think

* It seems to me that, for all the explanations and illustrations of the Trinity, scarcely a man of them was able to retain anything more than an unconvincing, geometrical idea of the equality and unity of the persons of the Trinity, which they tried to express in various ways, the triangular diagram among them ; but most, if not all, men retained the idea that the ultimate, to whom their appeals must come, was God the Father, a personage so mysterious, that it was long before they found any adequate symbol to represent him.

of a holy man within the cloud ; love springs in your thought. For to think of holiness as distinct from man is impossible to the affections. Thought alone can make monsters ; but the affections cannot." All the development of mediæval religion, following and emphasizing the human suffering, the wounds, the red blood of Jesus; focusing its gaze upon the Virgin in her most human relationship, her motherhood ; * feeling with her in her seven sorrows and her five joys; the preoccupation with self-mastery in the saints, with their courageous facing of martyrdom, their heroic endurance ; all this seems to me to be but providing the cloud with its holy man. In tracing this movement, I have constantly been impressed with its naturalness to humanity. Men longed for a god that they might love rather than fear: the mystery of theology did not interest their hearts, and though they celebrated Holy Trinity Sunday, their hearts could

* The human relations between mother and son, typified best by the womanly breast ; the boyhood of Jesus ; the temptation in the wilderness ; the human agony in the Passion—these are the points upon which stress is laid, and these are precisely the points which reveal the humanity of Jesus.

never beat high at the geometrical paradox. The study has led me into a conviction that a creed is never a matter of direct divine revelation in the old, arbitrary sense of the word, but is the codified result of universal (or general) aspirations at the time of its existence. The savage worships his god of thunder and lightning with fear and trembling, and endeavours to escape a wrath that may or may not fall upon him, quite apart from the question of what he deserves. But the affections (which are a steady growth due to civilization) cannot endure so monstrous a god. Anthropomorphism may be a curiously egoistical human self-deception ; it may be as fallacious as any other attempt to realize what God is ; but it is at least a product of the human affections. In this way, to my mind at least, much of the adoration of saints, the Mariolatry, and the forgetting of the senior person of the Trinity, is wholly laudable.* And out of these dead

* Religion does not seek to answer Pilate's question, but to satisfy man's instinct to worship an unfathomable mystery. Philosophically these aberrations may be condemned ; but in so far as they were useful channels directing the current of man's faith, they were laudable.

modes has sprung whatever remains in the religious thought of to-day that is tender and of greatest comfort. The trust in the love of God is but a further development of this anthropomorphism ; speaking humanly, we cannot conceive God loving man until, as men, we are able to love God—" Think of a white cloud as being holy, you cannot love it ; but think of a holy man within the cloud ; love springs in your thought."

These manifestations of a human religion which we have been studying have appeared to me, then, always as indices of the minds of men, never as stages in gratuitous divine revelation. No man that is honest with himself can be an atheist, agnosticism is as far as he can go ; those ideas which, with his human limitations, he forms concerning the ultimate or absolute truth that he feels behind all constitute the God of his religion. Allowing this, it must follow that, however contrary appearances may be, the Church is the servant, and humankind the real master ; and the real process is not that man believes what the Church tells him, speaking as one who has some

mystic authority (though this, of course, is the great claim of the mediæval Church, and, indeed, of Churches of any time), but that the Church adopts, and adapts itself to, human demands and desires of the moment. Considered in this way, the religious moods of the past are not matters for a later criticism—rightness and wrongness do not enter there at all—they are matters for study, and from the study of which we may deduce the needs of that moment. Our finger is on the pulse of the Church, not to say how fittingly or truthfully it beats in relation to absolute philosophy, but to read the heart of human nature at the time considered.

And the Church of the Middle Ages is more accurate as an index of its time than the Church or Churches of to-day can be ; because religion was so much more full-blooded then. Every department of life came into that faith : a man would not set out on a journey without obtaining a glimpse of some St. Christopher; his name and his trade were under the protection of some patron saint or other ; that part of human nature which desires beauty found itself expressed

there, as also that equally universal love of horror, or strangeness, or the supernatural. Men bought and sold and signed their documents according to saints' days ; their theatre, their art, and much of their literature, were bound up with their religion. There were saints to cure colic, and toothache ; saints whom sailors specially invoked, saints whom shoemakers honoured, and saints whose special function was protection from the plague. To cross oneself had a special magical potency, and the material form of a cross would keep demons for ever at bay. Even the well-known rhyme—

> " Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
> Bless the bed that I lie on "—

may take us back to the custom, mentioned in *Dives and Pauper*, of causing the symbols of the four evangelists to be carved crosswise in a house, as a protection against the devil. For there were two sides to mediæval religion, the dark and the light ; the devil was as real as God in those days—indeed, one might argue, with much pictorial and literary support, that the devil was far more real. The mediæval

genius had more than a touch of the northern artistic love of character, and not much of the southern classical love of beauty for itself. Character is only detected by comparison and contrast, it is thus most liable to exaggeration, and a sense of character in art is allied to a sense of humour or caricature. Mediæval art had humour, horror, the grotesque, and a quaint expressive ugliness ; and all of these qualities found more ready expression in such subjects as the seven deadly sins, "Les trois morts," the left-hand sides of dooms, and scenes of martyrdom and torture. When they aimed at splendour the mediæval artists depended upon colour and jewelling—upon properties of royalty, rather than upon the human form divine. They were shy of the nude, and when they employ it (as in the general resurrection) there seems to creep into their treatment an element of the grotesque. Devils were nude, and angels robed ; there was never any art for art's or beauty's sake alone, but always art for character's sake, or for the sake of the story. For this reason the pleasure experienced in regarding mediæval works of art is never a

pure sensuous or æsthetic pleasure, but a complex feeling ; it does not lull us by its approach to the serenity of absolute beauty, but stimulates interest by a thousand surprising details—interest in the quaintness, the variety, the bustle, as it were, of the story behind it all. By a careful limitation of the words we might say that mediæval art is *expressive* and classical art *creative*.

IX

The Day of Judgment

REFERENCE has already been made to the strong belief which the Middle Ages held in regard to the approach of the Day of Doom; and to the element of fear which this introduced into their religion. The number of pictures of the Doom given in Keyser (109) far exceeds even the number of Crucifixions; and this fact will assume even greater importance when we have examined one or two Dooms in detail, and have seen how large and full of figures these pictures are—each being large enough to employ several painters for a considerable time, and complex and difficult enough to demand some sort of professional artists. I mean that the prevalence of these more elaborate pictures, coupled with the fact that difficulties greater than usual were surmounted, points un-

doubtedly to a recognition of the necessity and propriety of having such pictures wherever possible.

The symbolism of the architecture of churches has been exploited as much by mediæval writers as by modern, so that one feels depressed by the strain of symbolizing after reading even so interesting a document as Durandus provides ; a strain not by any means lessened by the amiable myopia of such editors as Messrs. Neale and Webb. From internal evidence it is not always easy to decide whether this symbolism is due to the architect and artist, or to the ingenuity (not to say perversity) of later commentators of a symbolizing turn of mind.

Complexity itself seems a virtue to these scholastics, even though, as Durandus himself shows, they were sometimes lost in the intricacies of the mazes which they evolved ; and if they themselves did not always see clearly, how much less comprehensible must their symbols have been to the untutored and unleisured for whom, they contended, these stones spoke so obliquely ! But much of

Durandus, at any rate, is not due to him. He is first of all a compiler, a kind of mediæval research student, who writes down everything he has ever read or heard of which bears upon his subject. Such things as the orientation of churches, and the cruciform plan, certainly seem to show initial symbolical intention on the part of the designer. In the case of, say, the windows, which, according to Durandus, are the Holy Scriptures, by which knowledge is admitted to the church ; or the pillars, which stand for the Doctors, or Bishops, or Fathers of the Church (the carved capitals symbolizing their opinions !) there is no difficulty. We smile at the editors, knowing very well that windows were made to give light, and pillars to bear the roof. But it is impossible to account for orientation on practical grounds alone, and for this, which is a piece of inherent symbolism, Durandus finds it hard to assign adequate reasons or explanations.

It seems certain that this attitude of determined interpretation was a fairly common quality of the scholarly mind of the time, and the division of a church into choir and nave,

whatever its origin, carried, I do not doubt, a recognized significance, not very involved indeed, nor very hard to grasp. The nave, where the congregation stood, was like the world, the Church on Earth, or this life ; and the chancel, where the robed clergy sang behind the rood-screen, where the altar stood, and where the body of Christ was made, was heaven, the place of the elect, the Church triumphant, or the blessed life after death. And this, though with numerous exceptions, seems to have been often implied by local ornament. The choir or chancel roof was often decorated with stars and suns and moons; New Testament scenes are more frequently depicted on the chancel walls (though by no means always) and I have not come across one case in which the Day of Judgment appears there. There are two usual places for this subject : either at the west or east end of the nave, over tower arch or chancel arch ; and the chancel arch is far more frequently chosen—frequently enough, at all events, to generalize about, and to suggest a symbolism which is fairly obvious in such a position. The Day of

Doom represents the time when men shall be divided into two exclusive bands, those on the right (the spectator's left) being led by angels into the "blis that ever shall laste," those on the left being driven by demons down to hell's mouth. It represents the passing from death to life, just as, symbolically speaking, passing under the chancel arch from the nave might imply it. What more fitting place for the picture than this very chancel arch? It must have occurred thus in many an impromptu sermon—if such things ever were—although Durandus makes no mention of it. But whether it was intentionally so placed is quite another matter. I am sure that the editors of Durandus would have held firmly to the idea. It is, however, quite possible to account for the position on severely practical grounds.

It is possible that almost every church in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries had its picture of the Doom, and its figure of St. Christopher. The latter appears almost always in his particular locality, which was on the north wall, either over the north door or as nearly opposite the south door as possible; and no

THE CAULDRON OF HELL

(All Saints Chapel, Shorhampton, Oxon. Early 15th Century)

symbolical reason can be invented to explain this. It was, indeed, a matter of convenience alone, and was placed there so that passers-by might easily glance in and see him ; a business which few travellers omitted.

It will have been noted, even from the few quotations given from Mirk in Chapter VI of this essay, how the preacher harps on the need for confession and penance, and it is not to be denied that these particular sacraments are a source of great power and some profit to the Church. The picture of Doom is meant to make clear the choice man has between heaven and hell, and the mere fact that hell is always made more explicit than heaven shows that these may have been displayed largely as warnings. The worshipper stood in the body of the nave, facing towards the chancel, taking part in a service, which went on in a language unknown, by merely listening. The chancel was screened, and not much might be seen. The chancel arch was thus the most prominent place on the whole of the church walls. The gloating devils and the cauldron in the mouth of hell must have exercised an enormous influence

over a congregation so placed. This is one reason which is not symbolical ; but a mere question of expediency. I think, also, that an arch, since it provides a continuous space above, and divides the lower portion of the wall into two opposed spaces, naturally suits the nature of the subject ; but the retort due from the symbolists—that the arrangement of the subject is developed from the shape of the chosen arch—is perhaps valid enough. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the prominence which the east wall of the nave would give (the next most prominent large place being the tower arch, where Dooms sometimes occur) provides a sufficient reason for the choice of such a place, without entering upon any question of symbolism.

Let us pass on to examine, with mediæval eyes at first, a typical picture of the kind, in its mediæval setting.

Be pleased to imagine, then, a vividly coloured church, scented with incense, the east window rich with the morning light ; and from the chancel, behind the rood-screen, the drone of Latin—a familiar enough jargon, yet solemn and

impressive in spite of the absence of any definite meaning to listeners in the nave—or chants in the same tongue, or glimpses of the officiating priests at mass, with the server flitting to and fro, and the congregation stirring all together at the appropriate moments. They are uncultured, somewhat mechanical folk, somewhat awestruck too, with thoughts wandering as the familiar service proceeds. If they have no cultivated artistic sense, they have a natural and instinctive love of colour; they do not ask to be impressed by subtleties of creative talent, but only to be stirred. They are easily stirred.

They face the chancel ; and, above the arch, a great picture of the Doom overhangs them. Highest of all, and in the middle over the point of the arch, is Christ, severe, with the right side naked, the hands both raised, and the feet displayed, to show the five wounds. He sits upon the arch of a rainbow, and between his feet rests a round reddish ball that stands for the earth. He looks straight out of the picture, with that peculiar property of the eyes which makes it appear that his gaze follows you as

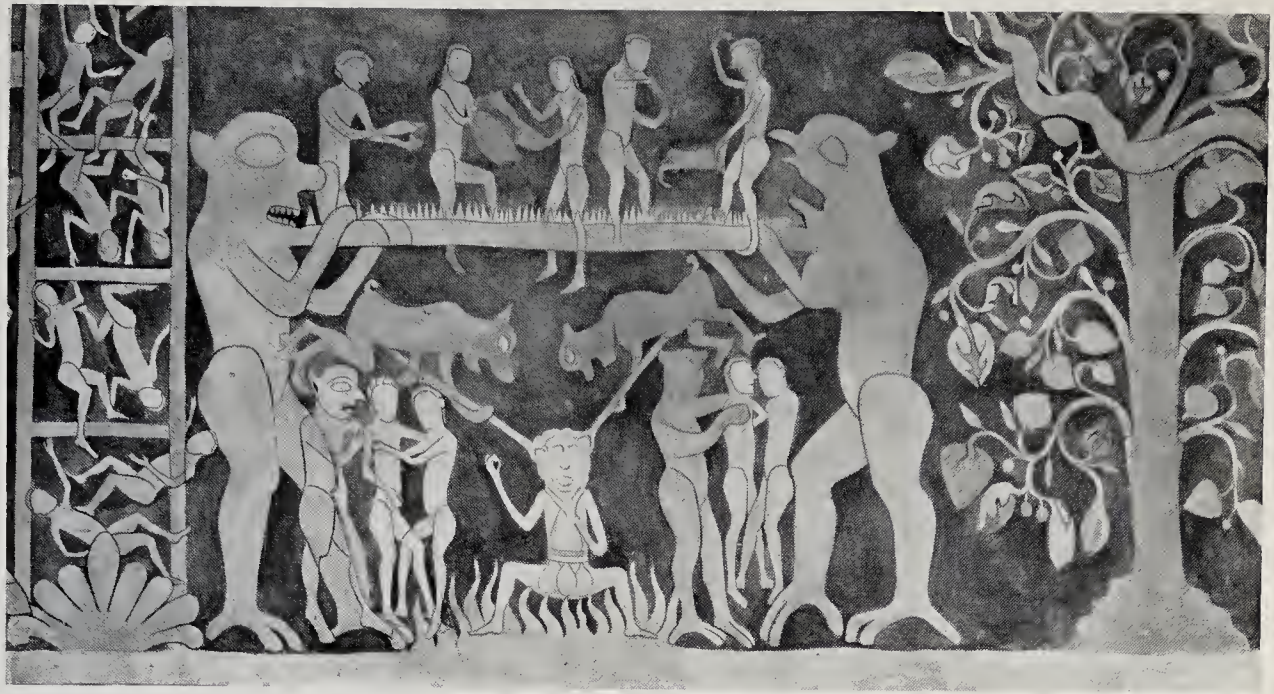
you move across the church ; or, standing still, seems to be devoted entirely to you.* There is nothing gentle or pleading about the figure ; the showing of the wounds is an accusation ; he is come to judge. Behind his shoulders are trumpet-bearing angels. His mother kneels to him on his right hand, and St. John the Evangelist on his left ; they are there to plead man's cause, and Mary uncovers and points to her bosom to remind him of her love and his humanity. Angels carrying the instruments of the Passion—the cross, the hammer and nails, the lance, the reed with its sponge—stand on each side of the throne, and four apostles are sometimes seated on a bench to the right of Mary. Lower down in the picture many tombs are being pushed open by naked bodies answering the trumpets of the angels ; these are men and women of varying conditions of life, whose ranks are shown by the head-dresses—mitres and tiaras and crowns—which they wear. Below Christ in Judgment stands St. Michael, with a pair of balances, weighing

* Such a property, which has fascinated many a child, would have seemed miraculous to a peasant of those times.

the souls. Sometimes an angel presents the soul for the test (souls are diminutive nude figures) and the devil as his own advocate stands by, black and menacing, often laying violent hands on the balances, and trying to drag the soul down, against all justice, or flourishing a parchment scroll, or a bow. Angels to the right of Michael lead off those who have passed the ordeal to the towers and windowed walls of the New Jerusalem ; but in French sculpture heaven is represented by Abraham holding a napkin, out of which peep the diminutive heads of the souls of the blest.

Devils, hideously and emphatically grotesque, are driving the doomed with pitchforks towards hell ; and in the companies of the doomed, as well as those of the blest, and almost always, various ranks are shown ; in both, too, are ecclesiastical persons of importance. There are no children in the Dooms that I have seen. Although not much direct expression of delight is noticeable about paradise, hell is always very vivid and definite. Hell-mouth is literally a mouth, belching forth flames, and bearing in its gaping jaws a huge cauldron full of

struggling bodies, which are being prodded down by exultant and grinning demons, while others are driving more and more doomed souls to the torment. The whole of Mirk's sermon for Advent Sunday is pitched in this key of terror. Christ in Judgment is always referred to as mercilessly just : " Above him shall be Christ, his doomsman, so wroth that no tongue can tell." A terrible and solemn note of warning marks the exhortations made during the preacher's vivid descriptions of the fifteen days before the Doom, and the sermon ends with a story, quoted from St. Bede, of a husbandman " here in Englond " that fell sick and was vouchsafed a vision of hell. An angel showed him first to a place of bitterest cold, then to a place of the fiercest heat, and " souls were cast out of that one into the other." And after this he was shown a flaming mouth disgorging furious flames, from which mouth he heard also voices of fiends crying : " Slay, slay, slay, slay, slay, slay ; upon the broach, roast hot ; cast into the cauldron ; seethe fast in pitch, and cood, and brimstone, and hot lead ! " " Thus," continues the



THE LADDER OF SALVATION

TORMENTS OF THE WICKED
(Chaldon, Surrey, late 12th Century)

THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

preacher, " they that been damned to hell, they stint never to cry and yell : ' Woe is him that thither shall go ! ' God himself shield us therefrom and bring us to the bliss he bought us to. Amen."

The points of immediate interest in these paintings of the Day of Doom, those foci which would draw the roving eyes of such a congregation as we have imagined, and upon which the painter has obviously spent most dynamic force, are, first, the mouth of hell, with its concourse of terror and horror ; secondly, the inexorable Judge, looking deep into each heart, and displaying the wounds which are his indictment of men ; and, thirdly, the weighing of souls. Of beauty or tenderness, save for the kneeling and compassionate Virgin, there is nothing. The sum of the picture is the horror, danger, and imminence of a frightful doom.

It may, perhaps, be necessary to anticipate a possible objection, raised on the grounds of this didacticism, to an idea which has already been mentioned here—that ultimately pictures were in churches by the sufferance and

subconscious choice of their congregations. But love of "the horrors" is certainly an element of human nature, and, if it did not seem incongruous to do so, I think this objection could be defeated by a reference to popular cinema pictures of to-day, where what is sensational is given an added attraction by its connection with the punishment of crime. The reference is, perhaps, all that is necessary.

From the point of view of the ordinary sight-seer of to-day these Dooms (I speak now of English paintings alone) are crude and provoking. The devils incite to laughter, and the mouth of hell, by its literalness, is a diverting simplicity. But we have lost our belief in devils and hell, we abhor anything too definite about our beliefs to-day, and can treat the Doom as a fantastic romance. I would not wish for a moment to attack such an attitude of mind, but only to notice that for the purposes of history it is a hindrance. It is necessary to consider these things as the serious expression of adult minds, to whom merely to doubt would have been blasphemy ; and it is only by an acceptance of the crude directness

of the technique of these artists and their times that one can forget the qualities of quaintness which the lapse of time has added, and see these things as the naked facts which they were to the ordinary man of the Middle Ages. For my own opinion, I cannot conceive of anything more telling, or more likely to drive home into the often vacant minds of such worshippers ; for this Doom was no picture of a far-away and misty possibility, but a representation of what might be, perhaps, the day after to-morrow. There was more significance than the mere pictorial symbolism in the angels with their trumpets ; because the fact was that these amazed onlookers could never quite rid their minds of the idea that at any moment the real note of Doom's trump might come reverberating down, and all these horrors spring into reality.

X

The Growth and Persistence of Legends

UP to this point we have gone over only the ground common to the sacred writings of the Middle Ages and our own times, the strictly Biblical narratives, making an exception for the sake of chronology in the cases of the legends of the Virgin Mary. When we come to a consideration of the representations of saints the task is altered, because the lives of the saints are no longer current common property. It would be hopeless to attempt to deal with all the sanits whose names are found in Keyser ; and such an undertaking would be unnecessary too, and full of redundancies. At the end of this book a tabulated list of saints so mentioned will be placed, the names arranged in order, according to the frequency with which they recur. Here I propose, among other things, to deal with the stories of a few of the most popular, as well

from the literary as the pictorial standpoint, and to base any deductions and remarks mainly upon those lives I cite.

The quantity and diversity of mediæval literature is only less amazing than its strange and sometimes violently preserved uniformity. There were few scientists who were not first of all religious men, and no historians who were not clerics; and, whatever the study in hand, opportunity was never lost of turning it to religious account. The bestiaries and books of marvel, the histories of the world since the creation, the romances and tales in such collections as the *Gesta Romanorum*, were all drawn into the ecclesiastical nets. No story was complete until it was shown to be allegory. The people then, as always, loved to hear of strange folk and wonderful adventures; and the wisdom of the Church, instead of entirely ignoring so instinctive a passion, recognized it and played up to it. I do not mean that there were no protests from within against it—there were, and these constantly—but the protests came from individuals; as an institution the Church gave way, and, as I think now, wisely, if not inevitably. The

wildest of the tales in the *Gesta Romanorum* received its justification as soon as it received its far-from-obvious moral. One cannot help feeling that the populace swallowed the anagogical pill because they loved the jam that disguised it ; but the jam was out of all proportion to the medicine it was meant to convey, and the connection between moral and romance was often so involved or imaginary that it could have been no hardship, and no particular drag upon the story.

Narrative of the most amazing kind forms the skeleton of many of the sermons in Mirk's "Festial" : "I read in the Gests of the Romans," is the sole introduction to many of the tales, and it is not given in any excusing spirit, but almost as one might say : "As it says in the Bible," to a congregation of Quakers. On the feast days of the apostles their full legendary history is given, and no distinction whatever is made between the Biblical and the apocryphal parts of the stories. A comparison with the *Golden Legend*, in the case of the apostles, or that of any of the later saints, shows how completely canonized these legends had

become ; for the variations are slight, and generally due to curtailment or extension (of which these stories are eminently capable) and often the very language is similar. The *Golden Legend* (1270) is quoted like the *Gesta Romanorum* or the gospel ; but all the stories are not identified as coming from these main sources.

If it could be assumed that Mirk's sermons were typical, and that such discourses were commonly delivered in most English churches, there would not be much doubt that the members of their congregations would have had a fairly clear and correct idea of the pictures which adorned their churches. Unfortunately preaching was in a very neglected state, as may be shown by the numerous references to it, and the repeated, and therefore unavailing, efforts to improve it. The following quotation from William of Malmesbury * throws some light upon the condition of preaching, and upon the kind of man filling the office of priest :

" Two clerks, friends, obtained, before they had reached the legal age, the priesthood from

* Book III. p. 270. Bohn's Antiquarian Library, 1847.

the bishop, more by entreaty than desert. They had studied much and were learned in literature and worldly lore, but they had studied the wrong matter. They vowed that whoever should die first should visit the other and confirm the Platonic tenet, that death does not extinguish the spirit. Sudden death overtook one. After thirty days he appeared and described his torments in hell. His friend offered all kinds of gifts to the Church to save his brother from hell, but the latter said that such things would be in vain : his judgment was irrevocable. He then proceeded to warn him, and concluded by advising him to enter a monastery. The living man was a little loth. 'If you doubt, wretched man,' said he from hell, 'turn and read these letters,' and, with these words, he stretched out his hand inscribed with black characters, in which Satan and all the company of the infernals sent their thanks from hell to the whole ecclesiastical body, as well for denying themselves no single pleasure, as for sending, through neglect of their preaching, so many of their subject souls to hell as no former age had ever witnessed."

That the ignorance of the clergy was an open matter Mirk himself shows, when, as an introduction to some points of explanation of Easter ritual, he writes :* " For it is oft seen that lewd (ignorant) men, the which be of many words and proud in their wit, will ask priests divers questions of things that touchen to Holy Church, and especially of this time ; and gladly such priests as cannot make a suitable answer so, for to put them to shame. Wherefore I have titled here divers points which that ben needful to each priest to know, so he that will look and hold it in his heart, he may make an answer, so that he shall do himself worship and other profit."

Under the heading : " The Nativity of Our Lady " in Caxton's version of the *Golden Legend*,† we find the story of a priest of a parish, " which was of honest and good life," that could say no Mass but Mass of our Lady, wherefore he was accused before the bishop, who reproved him sore as ignorant and an idiot, and suspended him. But our Blessed Lady appeared to the bishop, and compelled him to reinstate the unlearned priest.

* P. 124. † Vol. v. p. 108.

However inclined one may be to agree with the verdict of the Virgin, having regard to the "honest and good life" of this priest, that he had in these the great qualifications which entitled him to hold office, it is clear that under such a parish parson the religious knowledge of the members of his flock would have been limited and inaccurate; not that the popular imagination would have been content to know little or nothing; but that, since the ordinary channel was not available, they would have built up their own explanations, as they did in the story of the two beheaded saints sculptured on a French cathedral, or in the tale of St. Nicholas and the three boys.*

It must be remembered that the lives of the saints constituted a large proportion of the popular literature of the day—*St. Brandan's Voyage* was one of the few books of travel and wonders till Marco Polo—and these tales bear everywhere the marks of a folk origin. Their characteristics are those of all folk-tales; they are often quite aimless accretions of wonder and horror, one torture added to another, one miracle

* See Mâle 1, vol. I. p. 287.

added to another. They show very little sign of any one creative mind, and still less of any artistic purpose. In the case of the ballad this tendency to wander off in pursuit of irrelevant detail is held in check by the exigencies of song, the need for brevity, or the tense humanity of the story ; though not always satisfactorily. But there was no such direct and compelling human interest in the saints and martyrs, and certainly no particular limitation of the story ; they were capable of superhuman marvels and superhuman endurance, and their stories grow, like snowballs, in bulk, with no special emphasis of any point but this extraordinary prowess. Nothing was inconceivable. It seems to have been a kind of competition of miracle and suffering. It is not expedient here to quote long extracts from the Lives of the Saints in order to exemplify this idea of their folk origin ; and to abridge them for such a purpose would be to destroy them, or at least to make them unreadable. Caxton's translation of the *Golden Legend* has the necessary spice of antiquity, and the reading of the Lives of the Saints is pleasant. No one who takes the

trouble to study them will regret the time, and I am sure that such readers will not need to be stampeded into agreement upon this matter of marked popular influence. There are signs of many hands : pagan and Christian, old wives and "sad" scholars, artists and logicians, moralists and sensationalists—but the substance of the legends is kneaded by the people whom they enthralled, and they are as catholic as humanity.

The representations of saints, like those of Biblical subjects, are divided into two main classes : image pictures and narrative pictures ; though it is not possible to classify all as definitely belonging to the one or the other. The image picture is, of course, the most frequent, not only because saints were the particular vehicle of prayers to God, but because, I believe, the painting of an image picture with equal decorative effect (or even greater) was produced with far less difficulty, as needing less imagination, less artistic genius, than an effective narrative picture would entail. One of the problems which the mediæval artists had to solve was space-filling, and the most

natural thing to do with a screen divided into narrow vertical panels was to fill each panel with a portrait of a locally popular saint. To tell the story in so limited a compass was impossible, but a full-length portrait, with a halo, and the emblem of martyrdom or some particular attribute, was a subject made for the position. The great variety of these saints on screens shows how each locality made its choice from the vast numbers of available saints ; or perhaps it might be the choice of the donor of the screen, as at Fritton, Norfolk (illustrated in the Dawson Turner collection), where John Back and his wife appear, together with their eleven sons and three daughters, kneeling to the Fathers of the Church. At Gately the screen bears, on the north side, the figures of four female saints, St. Audria, St. Elisabeth, the Virgin, and St. Puella Ridibowne; and on the south side, St. Louis, Henry VI, St. Augustine, and Magister Johannes Schorn, bearing the boot with its little devil enclosed, and wearing a halo like any canonized saint.* Many screens bear an equally heterogeneous

* See *Five Centuries of Religion*, vol. i., Appendix 26.

company, though many more are filled with portraits of the twelve apostles. The following explanation given in Mirk for the institution of All Saints' Day, makes clear the difficulty raised by the great number of saints.

"This feast was also ordained of the same pope (Gregory I) for to be fulfilled in our omissions for many saints' days we leave in the year unserved ; for they ben so many that we may not serve them all. For, as St. John telleth, each day of the year ben more than four thousand of martyrs (outtaken the first day of January). Wherefore Holy Church ordaineth that since it is so that we may not hallow each day of the saints at their feasts we shall hallow them on one day, and so fulfil in one day that we have left all the year behind. Thus each saint of heaven hath his worship of us while we hallow this day devoutly as we owen for to do."

Some of the remainder of the sermon is worth quoting here, as showing something of the orthodox attitude to saints, and their particular function, and their order of priority. " . . . And know well that this day your prayers shall be sooner heard of God than

another day, for this day all the saints of heaven together prayeth for us ; wherefore ye shall know for certain that all the saints praying at once shall be rather heard than one or two by themselves. For the saints that now ben in heaven were sometime, as we ben now, of our flesh and our blood and our forefathers. Wherefore they have compassion of us and ben fain to get any prayers of us the which they might present God with in our name. Then forto show that all the saints comen together this day for to pray for us, I tell you this that I find written in ' Legenda Aurea.' This vision was seen in the second year after this feast was ordained to be hallowed." The preacher then proceeds to relate the story of the keeper of St. Peter's at Rome, who had a vision on All Saints' Day of " the king of bliss sitting in his majesty, and great multitudes of angels about him. . . ." The king holds a court of all saints, being visited first of all by a queen and a vast company of virgins, " and when she came the king rose against her, and made to set her a chair of gold, and her to sit therein." Then follows John the Baptist with all the patriarchs

and prophets—"a great company of old men," according to a tradition which seems to have prevailed everywhere, and in painting too, by which the prophets were represented bearded and aged. Afterwards came St. Peter, clad like a bishop, and followed by other ecclesiastical worthies; and then a multitude of knights—the martyrs and confessors.

As a matter of fact not this vision alone, but the whole of the sermon, follows the All Saints' chapter of the *Golden Legend*, only in a much condensed form, and omitting a great part of the interminable division and subdivision which makes that chapter so perplexingly difficult to follow.

In Keyser's list there are 139 different saints named, of which 69 (that is half only) are found in Caxton's *Golden Legend*. There are, of course, many more saints' lives given in the *Golden Legend* than those represented in Keyser; and the *Golden Legend* itself does not include half of those recorded elsewhere; though, in translating, Caxton added many from English, French, and Latin sources not included in Jacobus de Voragine's original collection. This

will give some idea of the vast quantity of material upon which the artists might draw for their subjects, and will show how strongly rooted the cult of saint-worship had become in the religion of these days. It is small wonder that Pope Gregory ordained an All Saints' Day.

XI

St. Christopher, Martyr

ST. CHRISTOPHER, whose natal name had been Reprobus, was born in the East. He was a giant, twelve cubits high ; and simple-minded. Being so strong, he vowed he would serve none but the mightiest lord in all the world ; so he attached himself to the court of a famous king. One thing in the king's behaviour, however, puzzled him greatly : he noticed that, whenever the minstrel sang about the devil, this king made the sign of the cross. At length he demanded the reason of such a custom, and after much persuasion received this explanation : That the king, mighty as he was, feared the might of the devil exceedingly, and therefore, to guard himself, made the sign which kept the devil at bay. Then said Christopher : " By this I see that I am deceived, and you are not the mightiest

lord in the world ; but the devil is ; and I will leave serving you, and search him out, and have him as my master." So he set forth to look for this new lord.

One day as he crossed a desert he saw a great company of knights, and one among them of darker and fiercer countenance than the others, who asked him who he was and where he went. Christopher told him his name, and said that he sought the devil, whom he would serve because he had vowed to serve the mightiest lord in the world.

" I am that lord you seek," said the dark knight.

Then Christopher was very glad, and took service under him, and followed him. But it happened that the devil's company came near to a wayside cross, which the devil avoided by turning up a way that led them many miles about and finally brought them back to the same high road, only a little beyond the cross. Such behaviour seemed strange to Christopher, and he questioned his master about it ; but the devil would not answer. Then Christopher commanded an answer, and threatened to serve

him no longer unless he was told. At length the devil reluctantly admitted that he was afraid of the cross, because a man was once crucified thereon, who was the mightiest lord in all the world. So Christopher left the devil in anger, and set out to find this mightiest lord.

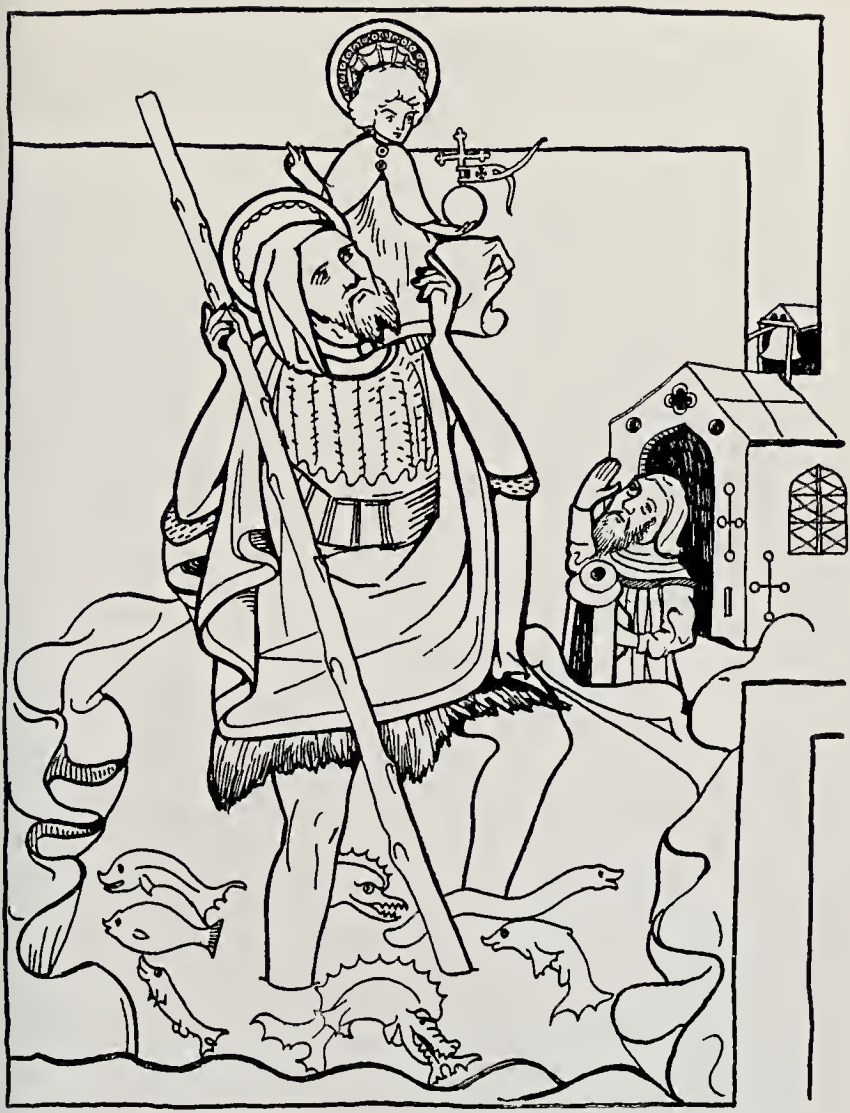
But though he searched long, he could not find him ; till he came at length to a holy hermit in his cell, who was able to instruct him in the manner of lordship which the lord of the cross exercised, and baptized him, and taught him the way of service. Christopher wished to begin at once ; but when the hermit bade him fast day and night he was sad ; for he could not do this on account of his great stature. Then the hermit said that he must wake and pray continually ; but Christopher said that he was unable to do this also, because of his ignorance. Finally, the hermit remembered a strong river near, where many people lost their lives in trying to cross ; and he bade the giant cut a staff, and dwell near to the river, and bear people across on his shoulders. Christopher was therefore glad, because this was a service that he might do well ; and he did as the hermit

told him, building himself a hut, and always dwelling near the river.

Now one evening he heard a child's voice calling : " Christopher, come out, and carry me over the river." So he rose, and went out, and, taking his staff, set the child on his shoulder to carry him across. But as he drew into the middle of the water the child grew heavier and heavier, so that it was only with great difficulty that Christopher managed to escape drowning and to reach the opposite bank. There he set the child down, and told him how heavy he had been to bear : " It seemed to me as though I carried the whole world upon my shoulder," said the giant. And the child, in reply, blessed him and said : " It was indeed as if you had borne the whole world, for I am maker and lord of all the world, the mightiest lord of all, whom you serve so faithfully here." In proof of this he commanded St. Christopher to set his palm staff in the ground, and to-morrow morning it should bear flowers and fruit. This the saint did, and upon it proving truth, he knew that he had indeed carried the very King of Bliss.

This is the summary of the first part of the story of St. Christopher; it is of Eastern origin. It seems to me quite complete in itself, a pleasant romantic tale, artistically satisfying; and, in the majority of paintings of St. Christopher, this is the part of the story chosen for illustration. The saint is shown as a huge giant bearing a palm-tree staff, and fording a river whose depth, though the water does not pass his knees, is made plain by the monstrous fishes that appear—at Ditteridge, Wilts, a mermaid is shown,—he carries a boy on his shoulder who wears the cruciform nimbus. From the cell on the bank leans out a hermit, almost invariably carrying a lantern.

But in *The Golden Legend* the tale does not end at this point. Such simple sainthood did not satisfy. There must be miracles, torments, defiance of a tyrant, and martyrdom. So Christopher leaves his river and goes to Lycia, where he learns the language by miracle, and comforts the Christian martyrs, and himself converts eight thousand men by repeating the miracle with his staff. The tyrant-king sends



ST. CHRISTOPHER

From a slightly restored copy of a mural painting in Impington Church, Cambs. (Fifteenth century)

knights to take him, but he converts them, and when they would willingly let him escape he orders them to bind him. He is led before the king, who commands him, on pain of torments, to do sacrifice to idols. But he will not.

After this the king sent him to prison and beheaded the knights whom he had converted, and dispatched two women to the prison to tempt the saint. But these were likewise converted, and went openly to break the idols, and so received the crown of martyrdom. Christopher is afterwards brought out and beaten with rods, and a red-hot cross is set upon his head, while he himself is set upon a stool of iron, beneath which a fire is kept burning.

Since these things do not harm him, he is tied to a stake, and archers shoot at him ; but the arrows refuse to pierce him, and remain in the air round about. One, however, returns and blinds the king. Last of all Christopher is led away to be beheaded; but before he dies he tells the king that, if he would heal his wounded eye, he must anoint it with some of the

saint's own blood. This the king did, and, being healed, believed, "and gave commandment that if any person blamed God or St. Christopher he should be slain with the sword."

I have told this story rather fully because it is typical ; but it is also easier in this to separate the germ of the legend, and to see from what the complete history began, and what manner of additions were probably made. Fortunately, however, it has more to do with the subject in hand than this, for among the 139 saints whose names appear in Keyser's list St. Christopher has a huge majority. There were then, when this list was compiled forty years ago, 186 known examples. Doubtless more have since been discovered.* But the majority recorded

* The *Times Literary Supplement* of July 6th, 1922 (within a week of writing this), has a full account of such a discovery in Little Baddow Church, near Chelmsford. The picture, from the description there given, appears to be thoroughly traditional. It is described there as a fresco. This is, of course, an error ; the correct word is tempera. Fresco was seldom if ever practised in England. The mural paintings are executed in colour upon dry plaster. In true fresco plaster and paint are partly incorporated ; for the painting is executed while the plaster is newly applied, and wet.

is so overwhelming as to make it quite safe to assert that there were few, if any, churches that were not ornamented with a painting of St. Christopher.

Suppose this story to be read to a class of fifty children, and the class instructed that each child must draw a picture embodying the important points of the story. Suppose, even further, that each child knew that the bearing of the Christ-child across the river was to be the most important incident. The resulting drawings would, I believe, only be similar in idea. Of course the main points, such as Christopher's giant stature, and his palm-tree staff, and the water about his knees, would appear in all; but, so far as composition went, and methods of expressing, say, the deepness of the river, there would result fifty different conceptions. Now the one thing that must strike any observer of these mediæval paintings of St. Christopher is their singular likeness in treatment, and even in detail. There are two ways of explaining this obviously persistent traditional treatment : either by assuming that the artists were few in number, well organized,

and itinerant, or that there was some original to which all the artists engaged upon these pictures could easily refer.

Among the earliest known woodcuts is one, well-executed, discovered in the cover of an old manuscript ; which represents the familiar figure of St. Christopher ; this is dated by some lettering, actually part of the block, 1423.* The beginnings of the art of woodcutting are shrouded in a certain amount of mystery. M. Georges Duplessis † quotes with approval the conjecture of Henri Delaborde that the practice was known in 1406 ; Chatto says that initial letters were certainly so printed in 1400. Not only was there no law of copyright, there seems to have been no idea of it even ; and, especially in the early stages of the art, and before it engaged the attention of any more than craftsmen, designs were constantly copied. The St. Christopher cut of 1423 is not by a tyro ; the engraving is carried out at a time when already some sort of woodcutting style

* Reproduced by Chatto, and by Georges Duplessis. See picture at p. 158.

† *Les Merveilles de la Gravure.*

existed. To argue from this that earlier St. Christophers of a similar design must have existed, is not, I think, stretching probability too far. Keyser shows, in his introduction, that only a very few mural paintings of St. Christopher are known to date so far back as the latter end of the fourteenth century. He says also: "St. Christopher . . . does not appear to have been generally recognized in England before the fifteenth century, during which period it is conjectured that every English church possessed a figure, either in painting or in sculpture, of this saint." The likeness between the paintings and the cut, especially in such details as the hermit's lantern, the grotesques of fish that encumber the saint's legs, the budding palm-tree, is so striking that there must have been some inter-dependence; for neither the fishes nor the lantern are mentioned in the legend. The respective dates cannot be ascertained exactly, but both are within a limit of thirty years, at the most. The important thing about a woodcut is that it is a process by which one design may be often repeated and scattered

broadcast. I do not suggest that the original of the traditional design of St. Christopher was necessarily, or even probably, designed by a wood-engraver: it is far more likely to have been derived by him from some manuscript miniature. But I think it very possible that the perpetuation of the general composition of this subject is due to the twin appearance of the cult of St. Christopher with the art of wood-cutting.

Keyser points out the general similarity of treatment, but instances Shorwell, Isle of Wight, as an exception, of more elaborate composition. This picture, besides giving the main incident of the river, depicts the conversion of St. Christopher, and his martyrdom. Other incidents of his story were probably represented by the diminutive figures which also surround the traditional Christophers at Alburgh and Fritton in Norfolk. At Alburgh, too, St. Christopher wears a cap surmounted by a cross, which may conceivably represent the red-hot cross which the tyrant-king caused to be set on the saint's head. It is interesting to note the devices by which the artists crowded

ST. CHRISTOPHER

(From the earliest known woodcut, 1423)

as much of the story as they could into their pictures. The palm-tree staff is generally represented as already bearing fruit, though this miracle was not rightly accomplished until the burden-bearing was over. The child carries the orb, to recall, perhaps, the exclamation which Christopher made about the weight of the whole world. The hermit's lantern tells the hour. The fishes—there is only one in the early woodcut, but it would be hard upon the mediæval artist to expect him to deny himself this opportunity—show the depth of the river. But we must note that most of these details would serve rather as reminders. To any spectator not acquainted with the legend beforehand they would tell little or nothing—the whole picture indeed, by itself, would scarcely convey any sort of story.

As for the cause of the enormous popularity of St. Christopher, I can only repeat what both Mâle and Keyser state, and what the Latin verses beneath the cut inculcate, that St. Christopher was the special protector against sudden death—death without extreme unction and the ministrations of a priest in confession.

This was one of the greatest terrors for any man of the Middle Ages, so much so that it had been expedient in the time of the Black Death, for the Bishop of Bath and Wells to assure his people that neither was absolutely necessary for salvation, and that in cases of urgency these offices might be performed by a layman.* But in Caxton's version of *The Golden Legend*, published about 1470, in the very height of the popularity of the saint, though mention is made of the power of St. Christopher in cases of " Sickness and sores in them that remember his passion *and figure*," nothing is said of this particular boon of his. But images of St. Christopher are almost invariably placed opposite a main entrance, so that passers by might glance in and see him there, and it is said that the mere sight of him on a journey was sufficient to guard a traveller from sudden death. Whatever the reason for his popularity, it does not seem to have been anything higher than a superstition. *A priori*, it might have been thought that the cause of its appeal was the peculiar simplicity of the moral ; since the

* Wilkin's *Concilia*, II. pp. 735 ff.

picture embodies the idea of Piers Plowman's pardon—that Christian service consisted mainly in doing well. But there is no trace, I think, of special mediæval emphasis upon that part of the story.

XII

The Question of Idolatry

PLEASANT as this story of St. Christopher is, I do not think that any question arises as to its influence upon the people. The frequency, the uniformity both as regards composition and position in the church, together with Caxton's remark about those who recall "his passion and his figure," show plainly enough that the paintings were there to be looked at rather than to be considered—to save folk from sickness and sores, and sudden death rather than to encourage them in the belief that true service to Christ consisted in simple service to fellowmen.

It is true that the preacher will sometimes moralize to his congregation upon martyrdom, or chastity, or brotherly love, and bid them remember these virtues in the saints ; but this

is in the general way. When a saint was considered particularly it was nearly always to obtain some boon by his prayers on the suppliant's behalf; and even the fact of his being an intermediary was likely to be forgotten; for when a man is in urgent need of some help he is not inclined to be reasonable and logical about the functions and processes by which it comes to him. St. Christopher, in the ordinary worshippers' minds, was a safeguard against death without howsel, and they did not use any refinement of argument to show how, by his martyrdom, he had obtained that privilege from God, and would present, with the certainty of God's granting it, any petition addressed to him on that account.

It was clearly the duty of the Church to point out this refinement, and then the "sin of idolatry" would be on the worshipper's own head. But unless such instruction was prepense, even the priests were inclined to speak loosely on this matter. There were indeed some priests who encouraged a superstition when they could make any material profit by it; and doubtless many priests were themselves

deceived ; but, on the whole, the Church, I believe, performed this duty as well as her vast organization would allow.

To express approval or stricture here, or anywhere else, is only to confuse the historical issue. But *qui s'excuse, s'accuse ;* and the fact that the mediæval Church has its apologists, who deal elaborately in theories and distinctions of worship, shows at least that the question of idolatry does arise. More than this, the existence of such a treatise as the first precepte in *Dives and Pauper* leaves no doubt that the question did arise. I must be allowed to quote rather fully from this dialogue, in order that the very bulk of the arguments there may make itself felt ; for a practice which takes such a deal of subtle explaining as is given to the use of images in churches is one of importance and urgency.

In Chapter 1 of the first Precepte, *Dives* cites Exodus xx. 23 : " Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold." " So by this," says *Dives*, " methinketh that God defendeth (forbiddeth) making of images, and

worshipping of them, and yet men do make images these days great plenty both in church and out of church, and all men methink worship images. And it is full hard to me but I do in that as men done. And if I worship them methinketh I do idolatry against God's law." This *Pauper* counters by exemplifying images made by the Jews at God's command, such as the cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant and the cast and carven work in the temple of Solomon ; admitting, however, that to worship these images is wrong ; but not to make them.

Dives. "Whereof serve these images? I would that they were burnt all."

Pauper. "They serve for three things. For they be ordained to stir man's affection and his heart to devotion. For oft man is more stirred by sight than by hearing or reading. Also they be ordained to be a token and a book to the lewd (ignorant) people that they may read in imagery and painture that clerks read in the book. . . . We find that a bishop destroyed images as thou wouldest do and forfended that no man should worship images. He was accused to the Pope Gregory which

blamed him greatly for that he had so destroyed the images, but utterly he prized him for he forfended them to worship images." *

In Chapter 2, *Dives* begins : " How should I read in the book of painture and imagery ? " To which request *Pauper* readily responds by a symbolical account of a crucifix : " Take heed by his image how his head was crowned with a garland of thorns, till they went into the brain and the blood burst out on every side, for to destroy the high sin of pride that showeth most in man's head and woman's "—and so on for each of the wounds ; and then follows this warning : " So that thou kneel if thou wilt before the image, but not to the image. Do worship afore the image not to the image. Make thy prayer before the image but not to the image. For it seeth thee not, heareth thee not, understandeth thee not . . . for if thou do it for the image or to the image thou dost idolatry."

In Chapter 3, *Dives*, " Methinketh that

* The reference is doubtless either to Gregory II (715–31) or III (731–41), who were equally prominent in the iconoclastic controversy.

when men kneel before the image and look on the image with weeping tears, knock their breasts, with other such countenance, they do all this to the image. *And so weeneth much people.*" * In his reply *Pauper* hits on a happy simile, pointing out that no man supposes that, when a priest reads from the book, kneeling, he is worshipping the book; so, since these paintings and images are poor men's books, they ought not to worship them, but only to read in them. In Chapter 4, *Dives*, "On good Friday over all in Holy Church men creep to the cross and worship the cross." *Pauper*, "It is sooth but not as thou meanest." He then proceeds through a tangled explanation that Christ is the cross, and that when in their worship they praise or pray to the cross by name they really mean Christ. "And so we speak oft in Holy Church service to the cross as to Christ himself and anon we turn the word only to the cross that he died on. And so sometime we speak to the cross and of the cross as to him and of him that the cross betokeneth. Sometime we speak of

* Here, and elsewhere, the italics are mine.

the cross only as of his token and the cross that he died upon, and so one word is referred to diverse things, and this *blindeth much folk in their reading*."

Dives then gives a second instance of what seems to him idolatry : " On Palm Sunday at procession the priest draweth up the veil before the rood and falleth down to ground with all the people and sayeth thus : *Ave rex noster*, and so he worshippeth that image as king." *Pauper*, " God forbid ! he speaketh not to the image that the carpenter hath made and the painter painted, but if the priest be a fool."

In Chapter 5, *Dives* and *Pauper* seem to be agreed, *Dives* at any rate is sure that no man ought to bow down to anything less than himself. And he opens Chapter 6 as follows :

Dives. " Sithen imagery is but a token and a book of the lewde people, teach me yet a little better to know this book and to read therein."

Pauper assents, and tells what images betoken in special, giving a list of examples which we shall quote later. In Chapter 7 he explains

what images betoken in general or common, explaining how symbolism makes a higher truth by not adhering always to matters of fact ; as in the instance of apostles painted with feet bare, in token of innocence and penance ; although in their life they often went shod. Of this Chapter, too, we shall quote later on. Chapter 8 deals with the painting of angels, and Chapter 9 of the evangelists' emblems, at the end of which *Pauper* himself reveals his own superstition in regard to the cross.

Dives. " Why be they (the evangelists' emblems) cross-wise painted in houses in four parts of the house ? "

Pauper. " For the same skill (reason), and for devotion, and for acknowledging of his high lordship that all we have of him ; *and against tempests and wicked spirits that flee the evangelists set in manner of a cross, and ben ashamed and abashed of the cross*, and specially of Christ's passion, by the which they were all disconfyt."

Chapter 10. *Dives.* " Why ben images hidden in Lenten from man's sight ? " *Pauper* explains at some length the symbolism of this ;

but *Dives* apparently does not care much about the reason, and breaks out upon the old topic again. *Dives.* "I hold it well done to hide images in Lenten to hinder men from idolatry. Natheless images of common offering ben seldom hid in Lenten, for letting of lucre." (*I.e.* it would prevent the priests from taking money offered to these images if they were hidden.)

Pauper. "St. Paul saith that covetise, and namely of priests is cause of much idolatry. For were there no covetise, those images should be set as little by as other; and as soon hidden."

Dives (who evidently feels sure of his ground here). "I suppose that saints in earth were not arrayed so gay with shoon of silver and with clothes of baudkyn, rings, and brooches and other jewels, as images be now. And sometime thou saidst that by the feet is understood man's love and his affection. And therefore methinketh that the feet so shod in silver show that the love and the affection of priests is much set in gold and silver and earthly covetise. For such richness of clothing of

the image is but a tolling of more offering and a token to the lewde people where they should offer and what." He has skilfully used Pauper's own weapons ; his symbolism, and his " tokens to lewde people."

Pauper replies : " Leave this matter, for it is odious to the covetous priests that win great riches by such images. And therefore let such words pass at this time and speak we of somewhat else more to the purpose."

In Chapters 11 and 12 *Pauper* expounds the distinction between the worship *latria* due to God, and the worship *dulia* due to men and saints and angels.

Chapter 13. *Dives.* " Me marvelleth much why men be so busy to do (make) the people worship images."

Pauper (beginning to quibble). " Worship is a large word and common to divine worship and service, that is cleped Latria, and to worship that is cleped Dulia, which longeth, properly to speak, only to reasonable creature."

Dives now, in his turn, points out that men do not worship living trees, much less, then, ought they to worship the dead wood of which

images are made—"sere dry trees that have no virtue at all, say forth what thou wilt."

Pauper (still on the word "worship"). "Also worship is cleped veneration, that standeth in honest and secure keeping, honest handling, clean dighting, in standing, in sitting, in place setting; and this manner of worship may be done, and ought to be done, to every holy thing that longeth to God."

Of course a great deal of this reassuring is trite, with much fuss and many words, showing that part of the impulse which produced the discourse was a love of dialectic. But some things may clearly be deduced, and these are worth being wearied for: we may gain a vivid idea of the multiplicity and magnificence of images;* the abject devotion which they called forth from the "lewde people"; of the fact that so great a number of people worshipped images that it was hard for a man of Dives' stamp to avoid falling into a like error; and of

* The brilliance and beauty of these things can scarcely be exaggerated. Some idea can be obtained from illustrations of screens in the Dawson Turner series, notably at Gately and Fritton. See frontispiece also.

the astute avarice of many covetous priests. We may learn, too, that much of the talk about the "Poor Man's Bible," so specious on paper, was in fact not justified ; that, at any rate, it did not go far towards curing ignorance and, on the other hand, that it did encourage superstitions. There was much to be said, from a Puritan point of view, for the bishop whom Pauper cites ; but one sees that he would have made himself vastly unpopular in his diocese if the Pope had allowed him to destroy his church images. By this theoretical argument against the worshipping of images the Church thinks to compromise with her people ; but what the people want, and what, in the end, they are allowed, is a multiplicity of images, not merely to remind them of Christ's passion and the saint's, not to warm up their morality with pictorial preaching, but mainly to gratify in them two instincts which run each other close, the love of splendour, and the love of mystery. Whoever shall say that the Church was wrong in thus acceding, must say that the people were wrong in thus demanding—which is like blaming a man for being born in Paraguay.

After a lesson upon the subject of butter-making, a child was asked how one made butter. "Well," said he thoughtfully, "first you get a cow." If I may be forgiven the analogy, as there is no abstract butter, so there is no abstract religion: "First you get your people," and the religion comes from the people; it is that form of worship, or of recognition, or of tribute, which they pay to a power of which no man is sensible and all men are conscious—"Some call it Evolution, and others call it God." Even so-called idolaters do not worship the substantial image, but the power which they feel resides in it. It was neither right nor wrong, it was part of their natural religion. And, anyhow, it is better to have faith in St. Christopher's image than to have no faith at all.

XIII

Attributes of Saints as detailed in "Dives and Pauper": The Lives of St. Katharine of Alexandria, St. Martin, and St. Nicholas

THE further extracts from *Dives and Pauper* which follow are not so important, for the symbols by which saints were distinguished are fairly generally known ; but, because they will help a modern reader to form a distinct and vivid idea of the images and the number and variety of them, it seems better to quote fully from so old an account than to make out a list from these and other sources.

The sixth Chapter. *Pauper.* "Imagery somewhat betokeneth in special, somewhat in common and general. In special token the image of our Lady is painted with a child in her left arm in token that she is mother of God,

and with a lily or else with a rose in her right hand * in token that she is maiden without end, and flower of all women ; and so of other saints whose images have diverse signs in their hands and other places for diverse virtues and martyrdoms that those saints suffered and had in their life.

" The image of St. Peter is painted with keys in his hand in token that Christ betoke St. Peter the keys of Holy Church and the kingdom of heaven. . . . St. Paul is painted with a sword in his hand in token that he was beheaded with a sword for Christ's sake, and also in token that sometime he pursued Holy Church with the sword.

" St. John the Evangelist is painted with a cup in his hand and an adder † therein in token that he drank deadly venom and through virtue of the cross it lost its malice, and did him none harm. And in his other hand he beareth a palm in token that he was a martyr and had the palm of martyrdom although he were

* See plate at p. 30.

† The mediæval adder is not necessarily a snake, but often a little black, dragon-like creature.

not slain; for his will was to die for God's sake.

" St. John Baptist is painted in a camel's skin at the painter's will in token that his clothing was full hard and sharp, made of camel's hair. He beareth a lamb with a cross in his left hand and his finger of the right there toward in token that he showed God's son that died for us on the cross when he said to the people : *Ecce agnus dei.* . . . See God's lamb, see him that doth away the sins of the world.

" St. Katharine is painted with a wheel in the one hand in token of the horrible wheels which the tyrant Maxentius ordained to rend her limb from limb. But the angel destroyed them and many thousands of heathen people and so they did her no harm. She hath a sword in the other hand in token that her head was smitten off with a sword for Christ's sake.

" St. Margaret is painted with a dragon under her feet and with a cross in her hand, in token that when the dragon devoured her, she blessed her, and by the virtue of the cross the dragon burst and she came out of him in health and whole. And so forth of divers images of other

saints, which images be made to represent to man the virtuous living of saints and the holy ending of their temporal life."

The seventh Chapter. " . . . Commonly all the apostles ben painted barefoot in token of innocence and of penance. Natheless they went not alway fully barefoot but sometime with galoches, a sole beneath and a fastening above the foot. . . . Also the apostles and other saints ben painted with mantles in token of the virtue and poverty which they had. For, as saith St. Gregory, all these worldly goods ben naught else but a clothing to the body, and a mantle is a loose clothing not fast to the body, but loose and lightly may be done away. Right so the goods of this world were but a mantle to apostles and other saints. . . .

" *Dives.* What betokeneth the round things painted on their heads ?

" *Pauper.* The bliss that they have withouten end ; Of which the prophet Isaiah speaketh : *Leticia sempiterna supra capita eorum.* (Isaiah li. 11.)

" *Dives.* They were not so gay in clothing as they be painted.

" *Pauper.* That is sooth, for many of them were clothed in a full hard clothing. . . . Natheless images standing in churches may be considered in two manners, either as they represent the state of saints of whom they be images as they lived in this life, and so they be to be painted in such manner clothing as the saints used whiles they lived here. Or else they may be considered as they represent the state of endless bliss, in which saints be now ; and so they be painted royally and solemnly as the cherubims (*i.e.* of the ark) that represented the angels that be in heaven, were made of gold (Exod. xxv.). Natheless in all such painture an honest mean, neither too costly because of this consideration, nor too vile because of the former consideration methinketh is to be kept."

Thus, though Pauper points out that the purpose of these paintings with their particular emblems ought to be " to represent to man the virtuous living of saints and the holy ending of their temporal life," we find that he distinguishes, in the last paragraph above, between the realist (or narrative) and the iconolatrous manners of painting. Needless to say the

Middle Ages, with a taste for splendour of colour and gold, made more use of the second method than of the drabber realistic way, or else combined the two methods, as in the East Harling windows mentioned, where, though the scenes of the Nativity, etc., are narrated, the Virgin is throned and crowned.

However preponderant the simple image picture may be, there are records besides of a good number of pictures, often in series, which narrate the lives and deaths of saints. Indeed, the fact that screens, being most conveniently and appropriately decorated with image pictures, were also of more permanent material than the plaster on the walls where the narrative pictures were painted, is sufficient to account, in some measure, for the present difference in numbers between the two cases. Now the narrative pictures themselves are of two natures, those which tell the story by means of a series of pictures, and those which give circumstantially the main incident of the saint's life. Such pictures as the St. Christophers already dwelt upon, and many St. Georges, and representations of the murder of St. Thomas of

Canterbury,* together with many others, fall into the latter class. Those most frequently represented in a series of pictures are : St. Katharine, St. Martin (whose history was once painted up in the east wall of the north transept at the parish church of Birmingham), and St. Nicholas. St. Michael himself might, perhaps, be included in the incident class, for he is frequently shown armed, triumphing over Satan, the latter either in the form of a devil or a dragon ; or weighing souls, as he appears in the Dooms. But the history of St. Michael could not be shown, both of these events being incidents not of the past but of the future. It is difficult to say definitely, of many pictures of St. Christopher and St. George, how far they may be considered as pointing a story. Their main purpose was most often to serve as images of the saints, and then the staff and Christ-child in the one case, and the horse and dragon in the other, can be counted as mere symbols of identification like the cup and adder held by St. John the Evangelist, or, in the screen portraits, the wheel held in St. Katharine's hand.

* See plate at p. 182.

The popularity of this latter saint cannot be explained on superstitious grounds, like that of St. Christopher ; and, though, of course, image paintings of her occur frequently, the number of instances of series of paintings in which her life is represented shows that her story was both well-known and well-liked. As Caxton gives it, the narrative is of compelling interest, with occasional places of remarkable beauty—the story, for instance, of her mystic marriage. She had everything necessary to arouse an interest in her career. She was of royal blood, of great personal beauty, consummate wisdom, and marvellous courage and endurance. The wheels by which she was to have been tortured, but for the intervention of an angel, seem to have made a great impression on the minds of men, so that, however large or small the series of pictures devoted to her story, this incident always occurs. If she should have only one picture devoted to her, this is the moment chosen, or if she be represented image-fashion, the wheel appears again as her most appropriate emblem. The fullest and most interesting series, a space of

THE MURDERERS OF ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY
(North Stoke, Oxon.)

wall measuring eleven feet by seven feet high, and filled with twenty-five rectangular panels, is found at Sporle, Norfolk, and a drawing of this series appears in the journal of the Norfolk and Norwich Archæological Society (Vol. vii. p. 305). It is crude work and most emphatically indicates that the interest in St. Katharine's story was not for the beauty of its central character, but for the torments and trials she endured. The wheel incident is allowed a panel of double size, but the whole forms a series of floggings, executions, and struggles, without one redeeming touch of beauty or lofty feeling.

This preoccupation with horror and terrible death stands out, if any one point does, as the salient factor in these scriptures of the saints, and, by direct portrayal as well as by symbols such as instruments of torture and martyrdom, becomes the emphatic assertion of most of their pictures. It shows a low sensibility ; it is one of the lowermost rungs on the ladder of Pity, and pity is a modern emotion. Extreme sensibility, which Dean Inge* finds in modern society

* *The Legacy of Greece*, p. 40.

as a notable characteristic, and which, he says, is an æsthetic emotion translated from the realm of substance to that of conduct, was certainly not one of the traits of men of the Middle Ages. It is necessary to take care, in condemning the excesses they commit in this matter, to preserve a keen historical sense ; and also, before we congratulate ourselves with any Pharisee's "Thank God we are not as former men," to remember in our own days the sensational Press and the cinema. "Malgré tous les efforts d'un siècle philosophique, les empires les plus civilisés seront toujours aussi près de la barbarie que le fer le plus poli l'est de la rouille."

What is most revolting to us in this interest in torture is the thoroughness with which these people gratify their curiosity. There is nothing vague or suggestive, nor were they afraid of giving rein to their imagination ; they enter into every detail of the tortures undergone, and their comments are more of admiration than of condolence. Nevertheless these legends and pictures did not really exist as encouragements to fortitude, though the

moralist might use them as such examples; their appeal was elemental, and their continuing popularity a product of their sensational nature; only thus can the evident process of accretion be explained; for, from the ethical or the artistic side, the story of St. Christopher, as given in an earlier chapter, is not improved by the additions which made him a martyr. There are, of course, legends and pictures where this indulgence in the curiosity of cruelty is not present; such is the story of St. Martin of Tours, whose life and character are well exemplified in the first, and best known, and most often represented incident of his life.

"In a winter time as Martin passed by the gate of Amiens, he met a poor man all naked, to whom no man gave alms. Then Martin drew out his sword and carved his mantle therewith in two pieces in the middle, and gave that one half to the poor man, for he had nothing else to give him, and he clad himself with that other half. The next night following, he saw our Lord Jesu Christ in heaven clothed with that part that he had given to the poor man, and said to the angels that were about him:

Martin, yet new in the faith, hath covered me with this vesture. Of which thing this holy man was not enhanced in vain glory, but he knew thereby the bounty of God." *

But in these stories what excitement is forgone by reason of lack of tortures is compensated in miracles. Thus St. Martin's miracles are numerous and surprising. By refusing to wear arms any longer for Cæsar he won for the army a bloodless victory; by his fearlessness he converted a thief about to murder him, and exorcised the devil, and by prayer "chased away the venom" of hellebore, which he had unwittingly eaten. Finding a man near a monastery dead without baptism, he kneeled by the corpse and brought him to life—"also he re-established the life of another that was hanged." He detected a false saint, the body of a thief whom people were worshipping as a martyr, and destroyed the altar erected to him. He raised a child to life, and by this miracle converted many paynims. Fire, tempests, trees, dogs, and serpents, were all obedient to him—there are miraculous tales concerning

* *The Golden Legend*, vi. p. 142.

each one of these. At Paris "he met a foul leper, and kissed him and blessed him, and anon he was all whole." He was visited by, and held converse with, SS. Agnes, Thecla, and Mary, and SS. Peter and Paul. Three churls who would have attacked him were thrown by their horses, who refused to move until the men confessed their sin. The straw in his cell catching fire, the monks ran thither to save him, and found him sitting in the midst of the flames, unhurt. "A cow was tormented of the devil and was mad, and confounded much people." St. Martin, seeing the devil upon the back of the cow, exorcized him, and bade him depart. For her deliverance the cow kneeled down to thank the saint.

And so on, till his death, which was also accompanied by several striking miracles. His mildness and gentleness of character are several times commented upon: "He was of much patience. . . . Never man saw him weep, ne laugh, ne never was in his mouth but Jesu Christ, ne in his heart but pity, peace and mercy. . . . He was much piteous against them that would be repentant and be penitent; them

would he receive into the bosom of pity. . . . He was much piteous unto the poor people."

The life of St. Nicholas is of the same character, and his miracles are equally amazing. Like St. Martin, however, the incident by which he is most generally remembered is an act of mercy.* Mirk's comment upon his name is interesting : " Then made they forto christen him, and called him (not) Nichol that is a man's name ; but Nicholas, that is a child's name, so that, all his life days, he held that name of a child, and the virtues with that ben meekness, and simpleness, and without malice."

Both of these saints were popular in England, the table (p. 230), I think, not doing justice to St. Martin, who, though he comes rather low in the list, is yet provided with a sermon in Mirk's " Festial," showing that his day (November 11th) was generally honoured. The prevalence of churches dedicated to St. Martin is also noteworthy. Both of the legends are excellent matter, for their interest, and, if it must be said, for their moral. St. Nicholas indeed became the patron saint for

* *The Golden Legend*, ii. 110, 111.

children, and also, as is well known, the beneficent white-bearded mystery of our lost Christmas mornings, familiar to us once, not so very long ago, by the childish corruption of his German name—Santa Claus.

With these most inadequate and scattered reflections upon a part of mediæval religion of essentially popular origin and appeal, we must leave the saints. I have tried to indicate something of the nature of saint-worship, and of the hold it had upon the people. I have tried, too, to be honest, and without denying the superstition, the errors, the revolting side of the cult, to show that it had its roots deep in the real stuff of humanity—strong, humorous, bread-eating, ale-drinking, hearty humanity, not as lofty as it might have been, full of frailties, but with a keen appreciation of sanctity and a true desire to do honour thereto.

XIV

Moralities and Abstract Symbols

IN the Middle Ages there were two kinds of sins, the venial and the deadly, and penance was allotted according to the kind. With their genius for labelling, and their love of system, the churchmen neatly tabulated these. There were seven deadly sins, Pride, Lechery, Envy, Wrath, Covetousness, Gluttony, Sloth—in their Latin: *Superbia*, *Luxuria*, *Invidia*, *Ira*, *Avaritia*, *Gula*, *Accidia*. As in the treatment of genealogy in the Stem of Jesse, the artists reduced this tabulation to a design that took the form of a tree. Pride was the root and stem of the tree, and the various sins were six branches. Distinction between the sins was made by painting a little scene at the end of each branch in which the respective sins were enacted. This seems to have been the generally accepted method, though there

are instances in which a wheel is employed. Wheels generally stand for the Wheel of Fortune, however, and a man's fortunes rise and fall round the edge of the wheel.* The height of fortune is the summit of the wheel, and the lucky man is there crowned and sitting on a throne ; in descending to the left his crown falls off, and at the lowest point he lies, luckless and full length. At Catfield Church, Norfolk, examples of both existed. In the Wheel of Fortune (inscribed *Fortuna Rota*) the king falling is inscribed *Regnavi*, he who lies under the wheel, *non regno*. In the tree of Seven Deadly Sins the branches are dragons, and the trunk issues from a dragon's mouth. The figures, enacting their respective sins, are thrust in at the mouths of the dragon-branches, *Accidia* rests cheek on hand ; *Ira* covers her mouth ; *Avaritia* counts money. Their souls, naked head and shoulders, emerge from the vents of the dragon-branches, chained together and dragged down to the lower dragon's mouth by two grotesque devils ; the chains from both sides join round the neck of an inverted king

* See plate at p. 192.

(whose crown, however, remains on his head); this is Pride, the crowning sin of all, and he is about to be swallowed by the great mouth at the foot of the tree. Both of these devices, really decorative in intention, may have been originally derived from manuscript illuminations. The ideas involved would have been obvious to all but the meanest intellect, though they do not carry much personal admonishment.

In French sculpture one of the favourite themes is the battle between virtues and vices, or else the opposition, in panels, of each virtue and its contrary vice. In England this is rare; and, while Keyser's list yields eighteen examples of the deadly sins, only one instance of three panels of Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice is found, at North Creake Church; though there is a Psychomachia, or battle between Virtues and Vices, in the painted chamber at Westminster Hall.

The Virtues, as subjects, were less popular with English artists than the Vices, devils were more frequently painted than angels, torture was more to their taste than serenity, and

THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE
Rochester Cathedral (13th Century)

quaintness and the grotesque offered more attraction to them than ideal beauty. One would not argue from this that the English common folk were more in need of admonition or strong warning than the French ; nor necessarily that the French were less addicted to indulgence in horror than the English. On the other hand, though it is largely a question of art, we should not rule out popular influence altogether. If the natural characteristics have persisted at all, pure art has always flourished more on French soil than on English. This would mean that artists attained to an understanding of their special qualifications as a class earlier there than in England. It would mean also that popular influence on art was more pronounced in English art than in that of the French at a given time. That English art was far behind French art in its development and power is generally recognized. With a limited technique grotesque is much more easily made effective than idealism. But, in addition to that, beauty is not, and never was, an end in itself to the Englishman : in other words, an English artist can never quite detach himself

from his public. The English are humorous and practical, the northern element in them allowed the *grotesque* and *practical* where it would not allow the more remote *ideal*. Instead of the Virtues, England has the Acts of Mercy, and of these, as of the Seven Deadly Sins, there are eighteen examples. These are generally in separated panels, and represent, with a certain matter-of-factness, feeding the hungry, relieving the thirsty, giving hospitality to a stranger, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and comforting prisoners. There is all the difference in the world between personifying the Virtues and Vices (representing them as fighting together, or treating them, anyhow, as symbolical personages) and the method chiefly used in England, of painting, not symbols of these abstractions, but everyday scenes which betray the exercise of one or another of these qualities. Let it be clearly stated, however, to avoid any confusion, that the Vices and the Seven Deadly Sins are not different treatments of the same subject, but are different subjects. Still more different are the Virtues from the Acts of Mercy; the

Virtues are catalogued as follows: three theological virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity; and four cardinal virtues, Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, and Justice. The Acts of Mercy are thus only subdivisions of one of the theological virtues, and that, indeed, the most practical of the three, " the greatest of these."

The wheels of Fortune remind men of the vicissitudes of life, the seven sins of the pitfalls of life, the acts of mercy of the comeliness of charity ; but there is one theme that had a greater fascination than any of these—the terror and loathsomeness of death. This appears in three chief types of paintings : either King Death himself is portrayed, a skeleton, crowned, and covered with toads and snakes ; or Time and Death together—though this is post-Reformation ; or a more narrative morality, known as " Les trois rois vifs et les trois rois morts," and examples of this are the most numerous of all abstract moralities. Of the types taken together I find Keyser has thirty-eight instances, and twenty-four of these are pictures of *Les Trois Morts*. Dates are not ascribed in every case, but there is none earlier

than the fourteenth century, while two are as late as the sixteenth. There are variations in the treatment, but the grim idea is generally shown as follows.* Three young and handsome kings, full of the pride of life, and richly clad, encounter in the forest where they are hunting or hawking three grisly corpses. These last figures the painter treats with a horrifying realism, they are not yet skeletons, though every bone is visible ; matted hair and sere skin still clothe them, and a great dark gash often discovers the entrails. Among the additional woodcuts at the end of Douce's *Dance of Death* are two which convey a reliable idea of the usual pictures of this subject, and in the *Archæological Journal*† the following verses are quoted in connection with such a picture :

OVER THE KINGS

" Ich am afert ; [I am afraid
Lo whet ich se ;
Methinketh hit beth develes thre."

OVER THE DEATHS

" Ich wes wel fair ;
Such sheltou be ; [shalt thou
For Godës love be wer by me." [warned

* See plate at p. 198.

† Vol. v. p. 68.

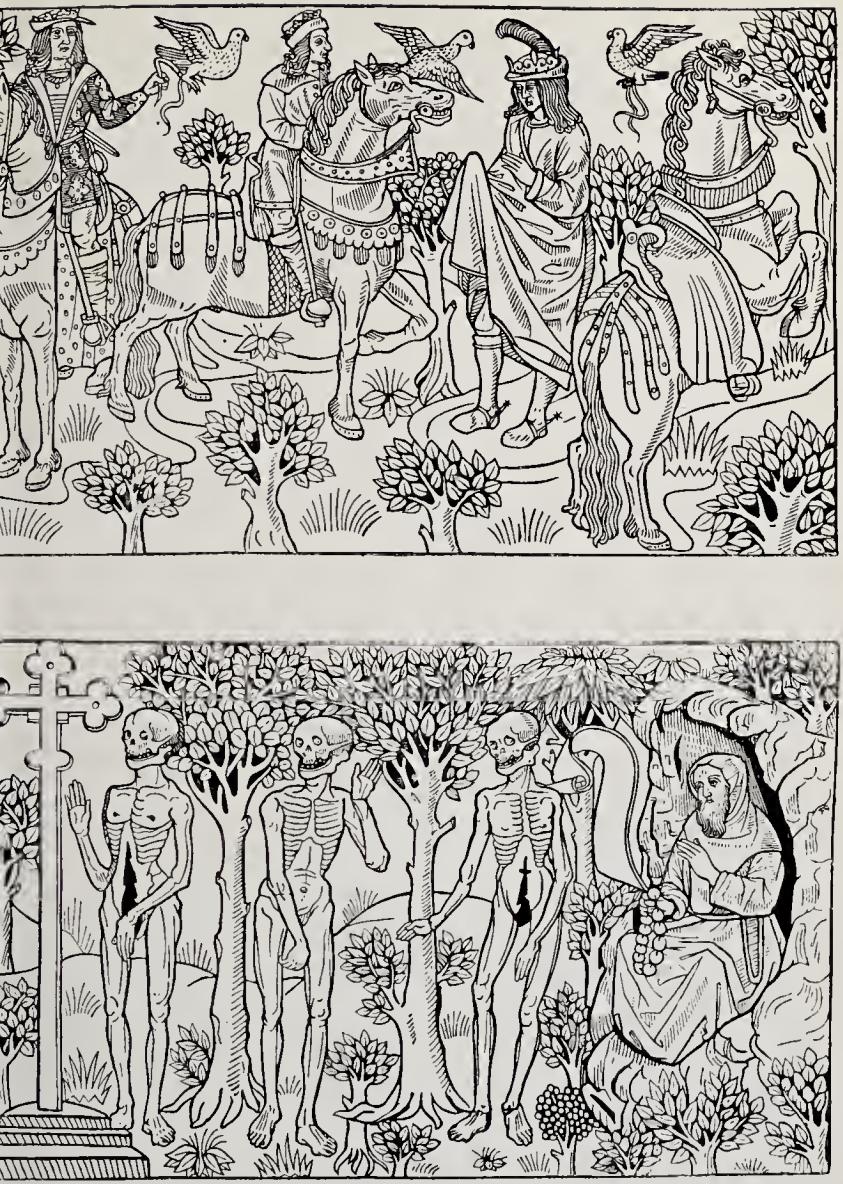
The subject, says Didron, first appears in the thirteenth century as one of a collection of moralities, the earliest manuscript of which he states to be French of the first part of the fourteenth century. The theme certainly came to England from the Continent, and examples are found in both Jersey and Guernsey. It is surprising to find so early a date assigned by Didron. In England, as we have seen, the idea becomes popularized late, and owing to the early ban on all forms of pictorial decoration of churches, its persistence is hard to trace. On the Continent, at any rate, this preoccupation with the nakedness of the horror of death continues. The skull becomes a universal emblem, and the idea seems to lie behind a great deal of German Renaissance art ; the popularity of Holbein's Dance of Death and similar productions testifies to the deep roots of the obsession.

It is not for me to link up this new fatalism with the turn in the tides of humanity that came with the Renaissance and the Reformation, but began in men's hearts, if it ever had beginning, before those days. It would be foolish to draw

a sharp line, and date it at each end, and pretend that by so doing we could partition human progress. What disillusion, what darkness of despair, came over the world with its change of faith a great writer has already shown. Whatever faults of logic and proportion John Ruskin may have had ; he erred, or tended to err, on the right side. If he made too much argument out of small beginnings, it was by reason of a conviction, right in itself, that one might contrive

> " To see a world in a grain of sand
> And a heaven in a wild flower."

He is guilty of an inordinate application of symbolism, but he so often starts with a right theory (though he may expound it by doubtful examples) that he is still to be read, and will always be read, for his truth and his strength. Of the significance of the cult of the contemplation of Death, Ruskin has written so largely and so sublimely in the last volume of *Modern Painters* that to quote only those passages which seem to bear directly on the Dance of Death and allied subjects would be destructive. The full references are given in a footnote, and the reading it is scarcely



LES TROIS MORTS

(From a cut facsimile in Douce's Dance of Death)

necessary to say, will amply repay the trouble of searching them out.*

This chapter of mine, as will have been noticed, is a kind of lumber-room where matters that could not be fitly dealt with in the body of the book have had to be stowed away at the end; for they could not by any means be disregarded. The character of the three foregoing matters, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Wheel of Fortune, and the Royalty of Death, is in reality non-Christian—not anti-Christian—and they might appear with propriety as adjuncts of any other ethical-religious system. Yet their appearance is important, more especially that of the last-named, as showing the temper of the minds of

* Vol. v. Part IX. chap. ii. § 7: Contemplation of horrors of death repugnant to a firm believer in immortality. §§ 8 & 9: Of the inferior state of mind of those who avoid such contemplation. § 10: Reasons of this. Wrongness of "looking on the bright side of things" when God has given them two sides. §§ 11 & 12: Examples. § 13: The necessity of fearless contemplation, and its resultant strength. §§ 14–20: The Greek way. Chap. iii.: Of Venetian Art. Chap. iv. 1 & 2: A dark time for all men. § 3: The resurrection of Death. § 4 to the end of the chapter: Dürer's noble answer to the challenge of sorrow and death.

the people for whom they were portrayed. I do not believe that the Agnus Dei, the Emblems of the Evangelists, the Seven Sacraments of the Church, and the Trinity, are nearly so important from that standpoint.

The Agnus Dei as a symbol has survived to the present day ; it is a picture of a lamb carrying a resurrection cross. Its origin is St. John the Baptist's exclamation before the baptism of Jesus, and when it is used as his emblem, as it almost invariably is, it is nothing more than a hieroglyphic translation of his words. Apart from this use, Keyser's list records only eight instances of the Agnus Dei employed alone. And in this capacity it is of no importance as a key to the religious life of the time—of no more importance, let us say, than the I H S or the X P I. As a symbol it has no mystery—indeed it is not properly a symbol, but a figure of Christ. Since no imagination went to its creation, and none to its interpretation, it has no life. The idea of our Lord as the sacrificial lamb has both imagination and life ; but it is a literary metaphor, and translation into " art " makes it

altogether petty. It then conveys one idea only, and that neither mysterious nor sublime ; for it is so frankly a lamb, and a lamb doing what no lamb could conceivably do, that to a literal mind it is ridiculous, and to the mind of a mystic it would be a hindrance rather than a help.

In the review of a recent book dealing with pioneer mission work in Africa, I came across reference to an incident which has a certain aptness here. " Is it true," a negro asked of the missionary, " that you worship a woolly dog ? " In reference to the evangelists' emblems, Mirk, in the sermon upon the feast of St. Luke, has the following remark : " . . . These four evangelists ben likened to four diverse beasts, and so ben painted in four parts of Christ ; that is : for Mark a lion, for Matthew a man, for Luke a calf, and for John an eagle. Wherefore many lewde men ween that they were such beasts and not men." Thus all the arguments for the value of symbolism fall to the ground. The original idea, when I first began the work of which this essay is the result, was to trace symbolism as a

component of mediæval church art ; happily, in the search for the needles, the haystack proved interesting. The people were too strong for the ingenious among the ecclesiastics, they were too matter-of-fact for artistic conundrums, they thought Mary was indeed Queen of Heaven, and understood her crown in a literal sense ; they thought the devil was real and ugly, and recognized his portrait ; and if, as we have evidence, they could imagine that the evangelists were really the four beasts by which they were denoted, some of them, equally ignorant, may have believed that Christ was a lamb, or that the deadly sins grew like apples upon a tree.

What, then, shall be said of pictures purporting to set forth the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity ? Eighteen examples are recorded ; Keyser thinks that they must have been numerous in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, "though, owing to a special order emanating from the leaders of the Commonwealth to destroy all the then existing examples, but few have survived to our own time." Two examples of early paintings of the Trinity are

THE HOLY TRINITY

(English Carved Alabaster, 15th Century)

given, one at Winterbourne Earls from the thirteenth century, one of the fourteenth century at St. Albans Cathedral.

Mirk says in the sermon *De Festo Trinitatis*: "For as Holy Church teacheth, he that believeth well in the Trinity, he shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned. Then is it needful to each man to learn how he shall have this belief. Then shall ye know well that perfect love to God maketh a man to come to the belief; for he that believeth well asketh no questions why, for love hath no reproach, whereas he that hath no love will make questions of such matters that shall never avail. For faith hath no merit where man's wit giveth experiment. But yet because man's wits be heavy for to believe that they may not hear nor see, but they be brought in by ensample. For though the ensample be not commendable, yet for the most part it may so lighten his wit, that he may the sooner come to believe." The preacher proceeds to give the examples of water, ice, and snow, which, being all different, are yet all water—" wherefore by the water ye may understand the Father, by the ice the Son,

by the snow the Holy Ghost." Earlier in the sermon he has referred to the heretics and "the false opinions that they hold against the Holy Trinity, as Lombards do now." And he closes with the story of a "great master of divinity that studied busily forto have brought into one book why God would be believed one God in three persons." He walked one day by the seashore, and saw a child there, who, having made a pit in the sand with his hands, proceeded to bale sea-water into it by means of a little shell. The divinity scholar thought this was foolishness, and when the child told him that his object was to empty the sea into the little pit by that means, the scholar exclaimed: "Leave off, son, for thou shalt never do that." "Sir," quoth the child, "I shall as soon do this as thou shalt do what thou art about." *

The perplexed folk who listened with awe to this preacher might perhaps discover in their church a painting or carving of an old man, robed, and with a papal crown on his head, bear-

* St. Augustine. A Botticelli picture of this legend is admirably reproduced by the Medici Society. See also *The Golden Legend*, vol. v. pp. 55–56.

ing between his knees a crucifix, while between these two figures hovered a white dove.* This was the pictorial example of the Trinity; it would probably inspire in a few of them an awe of a mystery which they could not grasp, and were forbidden to try to understand ; it would not help their faith any further than did the inadequate example of ice, snow, and water. In the ignorant who were unable to bring any spiritual understanding, it would not, it seems to me, produce anything but an effect exactly opposite to the intention of the doctrine. For I take it that the doctrine existed to prevent men from forgetting the inviolable mystery in which the idea of deity must be shrouded if it is to persist in man's mind. To the unlettered but literal mind of a labourer, God the Father would be comparable with his grandfather. I do not think it is either surprising, or a matter for censure, that such a labourer turned from so unheroic a conception to the splendidly ornate images of saints when he prayed. There he might open his heart; and the virtue of prayer is rather in praying than in being heard.

* See plate at p. 202.

XV

Summary and General Conclusions

IT will be best, if only for the sake of brevity, in making a summary of what has been said and done in this essay, to leave the numerous omissions in every part to take care of themselves.

To speak positively, then, we have found the church art, in that particular section of it which applies itself to space-filling and wall decoration, and especially in the medium of paint, to show signs of a directed choice. In illustration of sacred and legendary history it does not by any means cover the whole ground, which is so wide that some choice was imperative. The choice does not appear to have been haphazard, and it certainly was not individual; yet of the three parties concerned—Church, Artists, and Folk—none appears to have been autocratic, and the artistic tradition was, what

indeed tradition is by its very essence, a compromise.

None of these three parties was really stationary; but the basis of all was the people. By advantages of learning and organization the Church had established a measure of authority, but, since her existence depended entirely upon the willing acceptance by the people of this authority, the Church was often compelled to follow the path of least resistance. Thus, I believed, folk-influence must show itself in Church practice, however contrary theory and speculation within the Church might be. The worship of saints, the character of the lives of the saints, and the worship of the Virgin, the growth and importance of vivid ritual, the decoration of churches, the religious drama—in all of these I trace folk-influence ; for these, though not necessarily arising from lay sources entirely—the lower orders of the clergy themselves being, in this matter, more of the popular than the clerical mind—are additions to the creed forced into the Church from below upwards, and allowed by authority and, finally, accepted and confirmed.

The decorative sense of the artists is good; their colour was strong, and their sense of colour sure; this is mainly due to the apprenticeship, a gild system, which ensured a certain standard. Their drawing is crude, their technique limiting; their imagination naïve rather than subtle; and their intellect more of the type we associate with craftsmen to-day than of creative artists with idiosyncrasies. Their attitude to their art was entirely objective. Their expression is the expression of a class, not of individuals, and though it is true that artists came in the beginning from monasteries, the class to which they belonged, during the whole time of the production of the pictures that we have studied, was undoubtedly non-clerical—the class of artisans.

In 787 A.D. the fathers at the second council of Nicea laid down: "That the composition of religious imagery is not left to the initiative of artists, but is formed upon principles laid down by the Catholic Church, and by religious tradition . . ." And again: "The execution alone belongs to the painter, the selection and arrangement of subject belongs to the

Fathers." * But this was stricter in the Greek than in the Roman Church. Even in 787 A.D., then, it became necessary to assert the dependence of the artists.

There is no doubt whatever about the aims of the more thoughtful directors in religious matters, and it is clear that many of the pictures in English churches of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries are there according to traditions which must have sprung originally from such direction. The symbolic balancing of Old Testament and New Testament subjects, the concentration on those points in our Lord's life upon which doctrine was founded—these are sufficient indication that the tradition had its roots in ecclesiastical direction. But when we descend from the general to the particular, from the Fathers of the Church in 787 A.D. to the English parish church in 1350, it is clear that, however desirable such strict supervision might be, in practice it was impossible. Six hundred years is a long time, during which legends had increased a hundredfold, and the Church had attained a far wider sphere of

* Cited by Mâle, vol. i.

influence, and many more worshippers. The artists, too, who seem to have had some ways of their own even in 787, had been moving away from the cloister; they had been assimilating themselves with the people. One would not expect too fine an intellect in a parish priest, nor too abstract a theology; but evidence from the Churchmen themselves shows that the parsons were not, even allowing this, all that could be desired. They were of necessity more of the people than the Church, for their work was practical, and they lived with lay neighbours. One can see a thousand loopholes by which popular influence could creep in, even if the bishops had been most vigilant. Tradition would not be disregarded, but it could be modified. The Old Testament stories had never been painted for their intrinsic interest ; they were employed as comments upon the New Testament, comments not always clear to an uninspired mind ; and they would therefore have lost favour. The early chapters of this essay show that they were not much employed —and such late instances as the windows of King's College Chapel prove nothing. In

these, which are almost a *Biblia Pauperum* in glass, there was no question of popular influence ; they were executed by highly skilled professional artists, who followed, under skilled direction, an age-old system, preserved in its integrity by books, and which was especially suited by its comprehensive proportions to such a magnificent undertaking. On the other hand, such stories as the Nativity, fully countenanced by the far-away authors of tradition, would have been elaborated because of the romance of their appeal. The love of the grotesque would spend itself, quite legitimately, upon the left-hand sides of Dooms, and similar subjects ; the love of splendour did honour to the saints, and there was a good argument with which any questioning priest might content himself, as Pauper did. The interest in torture and in magic might quite well be indulged, for these were the miracles of martyrs and the sufferings of saints. The two chief additions to the schedule, the apocryphal incidents of the Mary legend, and the lives of the saints, are certainly concessions to the folk-mind. Their admission began under protest.

The quotations from *Dives and Pauper* show clearly that the enlightened Church fully realized wherein their popularity lay, but quieted their conscience with theories, and conceded on theoretical grounds what popular influence demanded for very different practical reasons. The gates were not locked, and the people found a way in. That this is so I do not think can be doubted ; and I believe that the evidence of the pictures themselves proves it. I have said that it was a compromise ; I would go further now, and say that it was a compromise distinctly in the people's favour—that the Church, comforting herself with specious arguments, went more than half-way to meet the people, and that one can read in these pictures little of Church theories and doctrine, and a great deal of the folk who delighted in them. That is what I have tried to do ; because that is the conclusion to which, without any preconcerted opinion, I have been driven.

Democracy as a factor of English life seems to have been potent long before it found a name and became a creed. The deduction I

have made concerning one part of social history in England is equally true of political history—the *vox populi*, even before it was articulate, was insistent. And now it may be objected by many good people, to whom the worship of saints is foolishness, and idolatry a sin—sincere people to whom it would be an injustice and an impertinence to whisper "Pharisee," and who yet conceive their own religion to be the only possible religion for a man in his right mind and sane moments—that the Church did wrong, whether she could help it or not, in letting the people fabricate a creed of their own; because, judged by the standards of a later enlightenment, this creed was full of absurdities, palpable fallacies, wrong ideals, and utterly false doctrine. It was in this same state of mind that perfectly honest and upright citizens once asked: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" These are personal opinions; they have crept into this essay on other pages, where, perhaps, they had been more properly omitted. But I ought not to be denied my last page to myself. Let it be stated, then, that I hold no brief for either Roman Catholic

or Anglican or the hundred other different varieties of Church societies to-day; I have written sympathetically sometimes of this strange hotch-potch, which was religion to the folk of the Middle Ages ; but this was not because I wanted to propagate any of its derivatives, for I most emphatically do not. It was solely because I wished to understand these people. Their religion seems to have answered all their requirements, and a good boot is that which fits.

APPENDIX I

Notes on the Illustrations

As this essay was originally written without any expectation of its enjoying the advantages of illustration, it seems necessary, since the liberality of my publishers has made pictures possible, to add some words about the reproductions. They could not very well have been specifically noticed in the body of the book, because they were chosen after the writing was finished. All but Plates XII, XIII, XVI, and XVII are reproduced by permission of the authorities of the Victoria and Albert Museum from their large and valuable collection of copies. Of these Plates VI and VIII are from coloured photographs, all the rest are from water-colour copies made at the various churches by Mr. E. W. Tristram. Plate XIII is reproduced by permission of the Librarian of the Rylands Library, Manchester.

Frontispiece. Plate I. *Figures of St. Philip and St. Jude.* From the Rood Screen at Cawston Church. These two panels will give some idea of the brilliance and beauty of Church interiors. The screen is obviously the work of a professional artist and is late. The counterchanging of red

and green—the two favourite colours of medieval decorators—is skilful. The actual figure-drawing, though competent, is not very virile or expressive. The symbolism of the mantles and the bare feet is explained in a quotation from *Dives and Pauper* on p. 178.

PLATE II. *The Virgin and Child.* A portion of the mural decoration of the Chapel of the Bishop's Palace, Chichester. It will be noticed immediately, on comparing this with Plate I, how, in advancing as technicians, the artists had lost more than they had gained. The beauty and appeal of this quatrefoil are irresistible. The attitudes of mother and child are charming and natural despite the stiffness of drawing. Colouring, to which no reproduction could do justice, is very tender, and the long flowing lines are full of harmony and repose. Compare, too, the ornament in the cusps, with the rather sophisticated floral decorations of the Cawston screen. The Cawston screen is self-satisfied and assertive, the quatrefoil painting is solicitous and gentle—one is professional, the other "amateur." The Virgin holds a conventional lily. On each side an angel, emerging from clouds, swings a censer. It is obvious that this picture is there to inspire worship, rather than interest.

PLATE III. *Angels appearing to the Shepherds.* From Cocking Church, Sussex. This picture shows a very different mentality. Plate II was in the private chapel of a Bishop's Palace; this is

from a parish church. There is no attempt at any sort of beauty, though it would be interesting to see how this bucolic artist had treated the figure of the angel. The two shepherds carry crooks, the angel a palm-branch. The nearer shepherd covers his eyes from the brightness of the angel, or of the star to which the angel's finger is pointing. There is no doubt about the artist's humorous intention—the dog makes it clear. In the cycles of miracle plays the two interludes most markedly humorous were the scene between Noah and his wife, and that portraying the appearance of angels before the Shepherds. The forms and the heavy outlines make it possible that this painting was not an invention of the painter, but a copy, or reminiscence from a window. The date is probably later than that assigned by the copyist—whose statement, however, I print.

PLATE IV. *Two Medallions.* From Brook Church, Kent. The whole of the chancel walls of this lonely little village church were once decorated with these circular pictures. Unfortunately little is now left that can be identified with any certainty. The colour in which they are executed is a kind of iron-red, like a stain in the plaster. The medallions measure (I write from memory) between eighteen inches and two feet in diameter. These copies were made by Mr. Tristram in 1908. Possibly the concentration necessary in copying gradually reveals more than can be seen on a first inspection. I

think there can be no doubt about the identification of Christ among the Doctors. I am doubtful of the second because of the order of the pictures. The chancel in its original state must have presented a lively appearance, for the artist is clearly telling stories, interested in the action and narrative, rather than in any desire to excite reverence. Along the south wall of the nave there are indications of a series of paintings, in slightly larger rectangular compartments, which, so far as one could guess, perhaps related the story, or the miracles, of the Virgin.

PLATE V. *Figure of the Synagogue.* From the wooden vaulting of the chapter-house, York Cathedral. Examples of figures of this kind are given by Mâle. In a symbolical painting of the Crucifixion, desiring to express that Christ made the old forms of worship unnecessary, and, by his death, founded the Christian Church, the painters (no doubt instructed by the priest) arranged symbolical figures of the Church and the Synagogue, one on each side of the cross—the Church on Christ's right hand. The figure of the Synagogue here reproduced is blindfold, her sceptre or banner-staff is breaking, and her crown falling. If we could see the Church, she would be clear-eyed, crowned, and holding an unbroken sceptre. In later Crucifixion pictures these figures were replaced by St. John Evangelist and the Virgin, who still symbolized (according to Mâle) the Synagogue and the New

Church, but had an interest historically which personifications could not claim. The artist's note to this copy says that the picture is restored.

PLATE VI. *The Flagellation.* From a retable in Norwich Cathedral. This is one of five panels of a retable discovered in Norwich in 1847. Plate VIII is another. The back of the retable had long been used as a table, and these remarkable paintings were found on the under side. That in the centre, the Crucifixion, had been cut off to make the table square ; originally it had been taller than the rest. I refer those readers who are anxious to read the whole discussion as to their origin to Norfolk Archæology, Volume XIII, page 302, where collotype reproductions of all five panels will also be found. Opinion hesitates as to whether these paintings can be native or not. The fact is, I suppose, that they are almost too good to be allowed as English primitive art. My own opinion is that they are too expressive and vigorous to be the work of a southern mind, and I think they are English, though they represent a standard of art of which very little besides has survived. There is enormous evil energy in the fellow with the whip. He fairly dances with demoniac glee at the suffering it is his to inflict. The callous pride of Pilate is also very finely expressed. He raises his left hand to hold the rope which binds Jesus to the pillar—or perhaps to pluck at his hair. The architectural setting has a slight and un-English appearance,

but suggests that the painter knew manuscript miniatures well. The background in all the panels is a pattern of raised gilded vine-leaves. Though the figure of our Lord is fairly successful as an expression of pathetic resignation to suffering, it is clear that the artist's real interest and power lay in the portrayal of more grotesque character. There are copies in the Victoria and Albert Museum of two other panels which were found in an old house at Norwich. These show a distinct connection with the Norwich retable, and may perhaps have come from the same hand.

PLATE VII. *The Crucifixion, with the Virgin and St. John.* From a pier in the nave of St. Albans Cathedral. The St. Alban's standard of art, as shown in this plate and Plate IX, was not high; but the present picture is a passable example of the conventional, and most usual, treatment of the Crucifixion. There is nothing to praise, the artist makes no original contribution whatever to his picture. There is clearly neither religious, æsthetic nor human interest in the subject on the part of the painter, and I imagine there could have been none aroused in the spectator. The conventions are there—the cruciform nimbus, the inclined head of Jesus, the proper positions of the Virgin and St. John, and St. John's youth indicated by his long hair, the proper pose of grief, the correct angle of the inclined heads, but a picture as empty of fervour as is its powdered background.

PLATE VIII. *The Resurrection.* From the Norwich Retable (see note to Plate VI). This reproduction gives an even better idea of the excellence of the work in this retable. In old pictures of the Resurrection the tomb is very frequently painted in an oblique position. Our Lord shows the five wounds. He carries the Resurrection cross and banner, and is robed in red. The crown of thorns, the wounds, the cross are all now symbols rather than realities. They are the invariable details of pictures of the Resurrection. There was manifestly great delight taken in the painting of the sleeping soldiers. Their features show that the artist had an unusual grasp of character. The bearded soldier behind the tomb might almost be a portrait. In this picture, too, the rich background is very well preserved.

PLATE IX. *The Coronation of the Virgin.* St. Albans Cathedral. There is nothing to add, so far as artistry goes, to the remarks on Plate VII, except that this painter exhibits a little more accomplishment in his management of lines. Our Lord and his mother are seated on a bench. Two censers are swung by angels above.

PLATE X. *The Cauldron of Hell.* From All Saints' Chapel, Shorthampton, Oxon. Compare this with Plates VII and IX. The technique is even less advanced than that of the St. Albans paintings ; but the force and expression—however crudely shown—are much greater. This is a true

folk-picture. When the accomplishment of the artist is little, he nearly always turns to the grotesque —it is so much easier to draw telling ugliness than effective beauty. Such a cauldron as this is frequently found on the left-hand sides of Dooms, often placed in a gigantic mouth, from which flames issue.

PLATE XI. *Three Scenes from Chaldon, Surrey.* I give the interpretation made by Keyser. It is difficult to be definite about the central portion of this curious picture. The figures on the strange saw-like platform that the two large devils are supporting are evidently engaged in some occupations, but what is not clear. The figure being thrust into the flames by two demons may possibly personify avarice, if the appendages from his belt be money bags. There are other large pictures from the same hand in the church. They are executed in monochrome, and are the work of a very vigorous and original, but not very subtle imagination. They also are true folk-pictures, perhaps of all my examples the earliest.

PLATE XII. *St. Christopher.* From a mural painting in Impington Church, Cambridge. The sketch was made by the present writer for comparison with the woodcut, Plate XIII. The painting is about ten feet high, surrounded by a simple floral border in vermilion and green (here left plain). The colouring must have been, at one time, very rich : the river water blue, the background dark

green, spotted over with flowers, Christopher's cape is red and so is the child's mantle. To-day the colours are rather faded, and the face of the Christ-child is growing indistinct, while that of the hermit is partly destroyed—I have restored it. The artist found some amusement in putting in the fishes, and achieved a creditable variety. The fish in the middle (nearest the spectator) is devouring another with evident delight. The painting is unusual in having a plain staff. In almost every other picture of St. Christopher that I have seen the coming miracle was announced by leaves and fruit growing from the top of the staff, as in the wood-cut (Plate XIII).

PLATE XIII. *St. Christopher.* From the earliest known woodcut, dated 1423, now in the Rylands Library, Manchester. For a full account of this cut readers are referred to Chatto's *History of Wood Engraving*, pp. 47, 48. The inscription below runs :—

Cristofori faciem die quacunque tueris
Illa nempe die morte mala non morieris ;

which Chatto translates

Each day that thou the likeness of St. Christopher shalt see,
That day no frightful form of death shall make an end of thee ;

and the date : *millesimo cccc° xx° tercio*, 1423. The original cut measures eleven and a quarter by eight and one-eighth inches. The cutting is

quite obviously by a practised hand. For the comparison of the two last plates, see pp. 155, 156, 157.

PLATE XIV. *The Murderers of St. Thomas of Canterbury*. North Stoke, Oxon. A fine direct piece of drawing applied to a very popular subject. The figure of St. Thomas no longer exists. His story seems to have made a great impression on the minds of men, and the account of his life and death is one of the most moving of Caxton's chapters (*Golden Legend*, vol. ii. p. 182). Here is Caxton's account of the murder :—

"And these four knights aforesaid came to Canterbury on the Tuesday in Christmas week about Evensong time, and came to S. Thomas and said that the king commanded him to make amends for the wrongs that he had done . . . or else they should slay him. Then said Thomas: All that I ought to do by right, that will I with a good will do, but as to the sentence that is executed I may not undo (*he had cursed the offenders*) but that they will submit them to the correction of holy church, for it was done by our holy father the pope and not by me. . . . Then one of the knights smote him as he kneeled before the altar on the head. And one Sir Edward Grim, that was his crossier put forth his arm with the cross to bear off the stroke, and the stroke smote the cross asunder and his arm almost off, wherefore he fled for fear, and so did all the monks, that were that time at compline. And then smote each at him, that they smote off a great piece of the skull of his head, that his brain fell on the pavement. And so they slew and martyred him, and were so cruel that one of them brake the point of his sword against the pavement.

"If I should here express," says Caxton, "all the miracles that it hath pleased God to show for this holy saint it should

contain a whole volume." And at the very end he writes: "Then let us pray to this glorious martyr to be our advocate, that by his petition we may come to everlasting bliss. Amen."

The place where his shrine once stood, behind the choir in Canterbury Cathedral, is to-day witness to the enormous popularity he enjoyed, for the very pavement is hollowed out by the knees of pilgrims, so that the exact position of the shrine may be still clearly remarked.

PLATE XV. *The Wheel of Fortune.* From Rochester Cathedral. Two men are rising; one, seated, has attained to good fortune. If we could have seen the whole of Fortune's Wheel, those on the other side would have been falling headlong.

PLATE XVI. *Les Trois Rois Vifs et les Trois Rois Morts.* From a cut facsimiled in Douce's *Dance of Death.* No reference is given in my edition. I believe it is from "*Horæ ad usum Sarum*" 1495. In some versions of the story or morality the vision is seen by a hermit, who is evidently the person represented at the extreme right of the lower cut. (See Bohn's Illustrated Library. Holbein's Dance of Death and Bible Cuts, 1858, for account of origins, pp. 27, 28, 29.)

PLATE XVII. *The Holy Trinity.* From an English alabaster in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The production of these alabaster figures was a flourishing English trade at the end of the Middle Ages, many, even large altar pieces, being made for

export. Nottingham was one of the centres of the trade, local alabaster being used. I was not able to get a painting of the Trinity for reproduction. In this plate the dove (the head has been broken) is seen standing on the top of the cross. The attendant angels hold chalices to catch the blood flowing from the wounds of the Son.

APPENDIX II

Compiled from Keyser's List

Biblical Subjects (and Virgin Mary Legend). Pictures judged to be of narrative type, and capable of arousing curiosity, and imparting information.

	Number of Pictures.
Creation	1
Adam and Eve	12
Deluge	2
Abraham (at Wissett)	1
Jacob's dream	1
Joseph	2
Crossing the Red Sea	1
The Brazen Serpent	1
Moses and the Tables of the Law	1
Gathering Manna	1
Job	1
Samson	1
David and Goliath	2
Saul's entry into Jerusalem	1
Saul arming David	1
Nathan and David (?)	1
Destruction of Solomon's Temple	1
Visit of the Queen of Sheba	2
Elijah fed by ravens	1
Jezebel (?)	1
Belshazzar's feast	1
Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego	1
Tobit	1

Stem of Jesse	9
Incidents in the history of John the Baptist	10
St. Anne instructs Virgin Mary	15
Presentation of V. M.	1
Annunciation	46
Salutation	21
Nativity	25
Annunciation to Shepherds	6
Adoration of Shepherds	4
Magi's journey to Jerusalem	1
Magi before Herod	2
Adoration of Magi	41
Circumcision	1
Presentation	4
Flight into Egypt	8
Innocents	4
Jesus among the Doctors	1
Baptism of Our Lord	2
Temptation	2
Peter's wife's mother	1
Preaching	1
With the woman of Samaria	3
Performing miracles (see p. 78)	11
Transfiguration	5
House of Simon the Leper	2
Triumphal Entry	6
Last Supper	14
Washing the disciples' feet	2
Betrayal, and scenes from the Passion — *churches*	34

viz.

Agony	2	the rest unspecified
Betrayal	5	
Trial before Pilate	5	
Mocking and Scourging	7	
Bearing the Cross	8	

Triumphal Entry—continued.

Crucifixion	82
Deposition	18
Pietà	9
Entombment	12
Three Maries at Sepulchre	6
Descent into Hell	10
Resurrection	37
Noli me tangere	7
Incredulity of St. Thomas	3
Ascension	16
O. L. in Glory	41

Miracles of the Virgin Mary	3
Five Joys of V. M.	1
Death of V. M.	4
Burial of V. M.	1
Assumption	14
Coronation	21

Purgatory	5
Doom	109
Hell and the Vices	3

APPENDIX III

List of Pictures of Saints mentioned by Keyser

Arranged in order of the frequency with which they occur

Christopher	186	Anthony	16
George	72	Ursula	14
Katharine	60	Cecilia	12
Michael	56	Blaise	11
Mary Magdalene	53	Mary Cleopas	11
Thomas à Becket	45	Roche (Rock)	11
Margaret	40	Erasmus	10
Edmund	38	Mary Salome	10
Gregory	34	Dunstan	9
Jerome	34	Edward, King and Martyr	9
Augustine	33	Bridget	8
Barbara	31	Clement	8
Ambrose	30	Francis	8
Edward, King and Confessor	30	Leonard	8
Helen	23	Sitha (Zita)	8
Elisabeth	22	Martin	8
Lawrence	22	Sidwell (Sativola)	7
Etheldreda (Audrie)	20	William of Norwich	7
Nicholas	19	Benedict	6
Dorothy	19	Giles	6
Agatha	18	Joseph	6
Agnes	18	Veronica	6
Sebastian	18	Walstan	6
Stephen	18	Denis	5
Anne	16	Juliana	5
Appollonia	16	Winifred	5

Withburga	5	Blida	2
Clare	4	Katharine of Siena	2
Cuthbert	4	Geron (Jeron)	2
Hubert	4	Gudule	2
Joan of Valois	4	Leodegar (Logier)	2
Kenelm	4	Martha	2
Louis	4	Monica	2
Lucy	4	Olave	2
Oswald	4	Pancrace	2
Petronilla (Pernelle)	4	Richard of Chichester	2
Christine	3	Robert	2
Elisabeth of Hungary	3	Scholastica	2
Ethelbert	3	Vincent	2
Genevieve	3	Wilfrid	2
Gertrude	3	Wilgefortis	2
Wulstan	3	William of York	2

The following occur only once :—

Acca.	Erminilda.	Milburga.
Alcmund.	Eugenia.	Mildrida.
Amator (?)	Eulalia.	Modwenna.
Anastasia.	Euphemia.	Ninian.
Anthony of Padua.	Eustace.	Odillo.
Barnabas.	Felix.	Philip, Deacon.
Beda.	Florence.	Quintin.
Bruno.	Fridbert.	Romuald.
Ceadda.	Gobnet.	Sampson.
Cornelius.	Hildegarde.	Swithin.
Cyriac.	Irenaeus.	Sylvester.
David.	Joachim.	Thecla.
Dominic.	Julian.	Theoba d.
Eata.	Justina.	Wandragesilas.
Edburga.	Longinus.	Werbergh.
Edith.	Mary of Egypt.	Willebrod.
Eilfrid.	Melangell.	Zeno.
Erkenwold.		

APPENDIX IV

List of Books used and quoted in this Essay

C. E. Keyser .. List of Buildings having Mural Decorations. H.M. Stationery Office. 1883.

Emile Mâle .. I. Religious Art in France. XIII century. Trans. from 3rd edition by Dora Nussey. Dent. 1913.

II. L'Art Religieux de la fin du Moyen Age en France. Paris. 1908.

Dawson Turner Collection of Pictures, etc., illustrating Blomefield's *Norfolk*. Add. MSS. British Museum.

Mirk's Festial A Collection of Homilies. Ed. Theodore Erbe, Ph.D., E.E.T.S. Extra series XCVI. 1905.

Louise Pillion Les Sculpteurs Francaises de XIII^e^ siècle. Librairie Plon.

Durandus .. The Symbolism of Churches. Ed. Neale & Webb. Gibbings & Company. 1906.

Dives & Pauper Cambridge University Library.

Didron .. .. Christian Iconography. Tr. E. J. Millington. 2 vols., Bohn's Illus. Library. 1886.

J. Fossey .. L'Art Religieux dans le diocese de Rouen et Evreux.

Caxton .. .. Golden Legend; or, the Lives of the Saints. Tr. Caxton. Ed. F. S. Ellis. The Temple Classics, 7 vols., J. M. Dent & Sons.

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